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ABSTRACT

This curriculum focuses on using creative thinking and conflict resolution skills in controversial discussions, highlighting the use of nonadversarial dialogue through the story of a fictional town caught in a controversy over whether or not to mandate school uniforms. The story that unfolds provides a case study in how to resolve public, as well as interpersonal, conflict. It presents techniques and structures for helping students build skills such as listening, managing their anger, communicating, researching issues, uncovering bias, understanding and appreciating different perspectives, and creating solutions. The guide includes 10 skill-focused chapters that open with scenes from the town and continues with activities for teaching, practicing, and assessing skills. The chapters are: (1) "Introducing Dialogue"; (2) "Escalation"; (3) "Managing Anger"; (4) "Using 'I' Statements"; (5) "Reducing the Bias in Language"; (6) "Active Listening"; (7) "Positions and Interests"; (8) "Methodological Belief"; (9) "Research"; and (10) "Building Solutions." Two appendixes present a format for a dialogue and scoring and materials for a dialogue about requiring students to learn a foreign language. (SM)

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ED 453 319

DIALOGUE

Turning Controversy into Community

A Curriculum for Secondary Schools

Helping students communicate through dialogue
rather than debate, in preparation for building
stronger communities in our diverse world

Rachel A. Poliner & Jeffrey Benson

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A Curriculum for Secondary Schools
Field Test Version

by Rachel A. Poliner & Jeffrey Benson

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Dialogue: Turning Controversy into Community
by Rachel A. Poliner & Jeffrey Benson

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Contents

Acknowledgments III

Introduction 1

Chapter 1 • Introducing Dialogue 9

- Scene 1: Seeds of the Centerville Uniform Controversy 14

Chapter 2 • Escalation 17

- Scene 2: The News Spreads...and So Does Conflict 22

Chapter 3 • Managing Anger 27

- Scene 3: Bloody Knuckles 32

Chapter 4 • Using "I Statements" 39

- Scene 4: A Failure to Communicate 45

Chapter 5 • Reducing the Bias in Language 51

- Scene 5: Opinions, Opinions, Everywhere 57

Chapter 6 • Active Listening 65

- Scene 6: Crossing the Lobby 69

Chapter 7 • Positions and Interests 77

- Scene 7: It's Just the Position He's Stuck In 83

Chapter 8 • Methodological Belief 97

- Scene 8: Seeing is Not Always Believing 104

Chapter 9 • Research 109

- Scene 9: Who's Done Their Homework? 114

Chapter 10 • Building Solutions 117

- Scene 10: Driving Through the Storm 114

Appendix A • Format for a Dialogue and Scoring 129

Appendix B • Materials for a Dialogue on Requiring Students to Learn a Foreign Language 135

Acknowledgments

We have a number of people to thank as we reflect on the development of this curriculum and the larger field of dialogue.

As early as 1985 there was a dialogue study group sponsored by Boston Area Educators for Social Responsibility. The group included Shelley Berman, Lucile Burt, Dick Mayo-Smith, Lally Stowell, and Gene Thompson. These ESR members and the Boston Area ESR steering committee made dialogue a practice within our organization and a goal for schools.

More recently, it was the vision and support of Dick Mayo-Smith that spurred the creation of this curriculum. Dick's dream of seeing students hold a dialogue, and being able to see such an occurrence *soon*, was our catalyst.

We appreciate several people who contributed ideas and work to this curriculum. Robbie Spier wrote the materials in Appendix B and helped us think about assessment while interning in our organization. Carol Miller Lieber, Michele Tissiere and Brendan Curtin contributed ideas for connections to literature, history and social studies. Eyvonne King and Dick Mayo-Smith offered provocative insights on the concept of dialogue. Ben Kirshner and Greg White assisted with technical processes.

In addition, the works of William J. Kreidler, Carol Miller Lieber, and Peter Elbow have been especially helpful.

Finally, we wish to thank The Touchstones Fund for its support of this project.

Introduction

We have all heard people say statements such as these in discussions.

> "You are wrong! Now I'm going to tell you what the right decision is."
>
> "How can you possibly think like that? You're blocking the whole process."
>
> "I know what the matter is here. Be quiet and let me speak."

These "discussions" are polarized and combative. They are debates really, whether they are formal or informal. People are opponents, competing to win. The debates result in strained relationships, limited airing of the problem, and lack of agreement, much less support, for the solution, if a solution was even reached. These exchanges take place formally in political debates, talk radio, aggressive interviews, and informally in many different forms. They take place in classrooms, faculty meetings, teacher-parent conferences, and throughout schools.

Many teachers teach aspects of respectful communication. But when a controversial issue arises, someone shouts out "Let's have a debate!" as if that were the only formal structure available. The less formal structure is a class discussion which often becomes argumentative and disrespectful. The teacher can proceed with either choice, implicitly setting up a context where convincing other people you are right is more important than learning from other points of view. What is another choice, one that is intellectually challenging and socially responsible?

Imagine a discussion where the following statements would be the norm.

> "The idea you just raised was very important. I'd like to consider it awhile. Maybe I should rethink my opinion."
>
> "All of the different perceptions described so far are making me think about the problem in a new way altogether. We seem to be building toward a totally different understanding and solution."
>
> "Can you say more about your perspective? I need and want to understand it, and how you arrived at it, more deeply."

Kendra O'Donnell, the recent principal of Exeter Academy, wrote *in The Exeter Bulletin* about her "Rule of Argument."

> This (Rule of Argument) describes how we talk to each other when we disagree--whether openly and passionately, or in a minor key. Much of human discourse is conducted as though the point, the entire goal, the expected outcome will be that one person says to the other, finally, "You are right and I am wrong." We go at it with each other as though that were actually going to happen, provided we talk long enough and/or well enough. In fact, that is rarely, if ever, the outcome.
>
> Why do we do this? Why don't we stop? What other kinds of goals and expectations could we have as we enter disputatious conversations? What if we expected not victory but to learn something, to grow in understanding? What if we saw initial disagreement, even conflict, as proof positive that we don't know everything, as an invitation to learn rather than a summons to combat.

Students see and hear many forms of communicating which inhibit shared decision-making. We live within many structures that create the type of competition in which one person is exalted as a winner over another person: business, sports, most academic grading systems. Races for the best, the fastest, and the most beautiful abound. Unfortunately, we see many young people today identifying only the competitive aspects of these endeavors. They see the end results reported in the media, the final scores, the winners and losers. Many students aren't able to see the teamwork, cooperation and support that are behind the scenes in many projects. They might even miss seeing the striving for excellence or setting of personal goals.

Further we see young people taking this "winning at any cost" mode of competing into other aspects of life-- friendships, learning, dating --where it serves them poorly. They might lose a friend rather than back down from a stance, cheat on a test to get a grade rather than gain knowledge, or violate a friendship rather than be sensitive to another's needs.

We live, work, and learn in communities where we have shared problems and need both shared solutions and strengthened relationships. Educators consistently hold as a goal of education helping students to communicate, and to participate in community and in democracy. Yet how can we do that? Students need to experience respectful forms of communication, and they need opportunities to learn the skills involved.

What are forms of communication that support shared decision-making, creative problem-solving, and community-building? What forums and structures encourage working with others to resolve community issues? What skills and attitudes would students need to discuss issues in a truly non-competitive way?

Dialogue rather than debate

In March of 1997, on the 38th Anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising Day, The Dalai Lama said,

> ...If we look back at the development in the 20th century, the most devastating cause of human suffering, of deprivation of human dignity, freedom and peace, has been the culture of violence in resolving differences and conflicts. In some ways, our century could be called the century of war and bloodshed. The challenge before us, therefore, is to make the next century a century of dialogue and non-violent conflict resolution. In human societies there will always be differences of views and interests. But the reality today is that we are all interdependent and have to co-exist on this small planet. Therefore, the only sensible and intelligent way of resolving differences and clashes of interests, whether between individuals or nations, is through dialogue.

We are proposing that dialogue and all of the skills and attitudes required to participate in dialogue are key for dealing with differences, learning and building relationships. Further we are proposing that the model of dialogue as a form of public discourse is desperately needed in our communities and the larger world.

The outcomes from using this curriculum

- Students will investigate the positive and negative aspects of various forms of communication.

- Students will develop communication skills that allow them to speak and listen respectfully, and encourage creative discussion. Students will learn to monitor themselves and reflect on their own interpersonal behaviors.

- Students will develop problem-solving skills that allow them to create solutions to complex problems. Students will experience skills for understanding different perspectives, search for the common interests, and sustain an open attitude.

- Students will make connections between their skills and the decisions made by people in history, participants in current events, and characters in literature.

- Students will participate in a formal "dialogue" in which they use all of their skills and knowledge to solve a conflict.

How to use this curriculum

Fictional stories have the power to release individuals from current habits and expectations, freeing readers to hold different visions and set higher standards. Therefore, we created a story: the fictional town of Centerville, its uniform controversy, its teachers, students, and parents who are engaged in conflict. The story line is the framework for seeing the need for improved communication skills and formats, and is a way of learning those skills in context. Students will see characters struggle with and learn new ways of problem-solving; they will see those skills modeled. Throughout the curriculum students work towards participating in a formal dialogue.

Each chapter of *Dialogue* focuses on one skill. Chapters begin with the teacher's overview including logistics, background on the skill, instructions for all of the activities related to that skill, and connections between the skill and literature, history and/or social studies. The "Background for Teachers" segments can also be used when giving examples or further explanation to students.

The connections to literature, history and social studies mention novels, films, events in history, and many other topics and resources. These can be used in several ways. If students need extra practice with a skill, teachers may select some of the more defined connections. The larger applications, such as novels in their entirety, or studying an era of history, are included so that teachers can carry the concepts and skills into other courses.

The teacher's overview is followed by student handouts. The activities and handouts in each chapter are in order as follows:

- a scene from the fictional Centerville controversy
- discussion questions for use after reading the scene
- skill-building activities related to the scene
- one or more extension activities to reinforce skills
- optional follow-up activities.

We encourage teachers to read the scene in a given chapter before reading the teachers' instructions for the activities, as the activities build off of the scene.

Vocabulary words and terms are listed at the beginning of each chapter in order to establish some shared and non-judgmental language around communication and conflict.

Times listed for the length of activities show a range. The lesson duration will be the shorter time if some of the tasks are assigned for homework, such as reading the scene and journal-writing. Also times will vary for the many discussions and activities based on teachers' and students' interest and reflection.

Assessment

There are tools for marking student progress built into certain assignments in each chapter. In some cases the tools are self-reflections; in other cases they are worksheet style formats. There are journal questions for students to consider and write about throughout the curriculum. Also, teachers may ask students to create definitions for the vocabulary words and terms as they progress through activities. The final, formal dialogue has an assessment tool to be used by a teacher, students or a judge. All of these are items that can be included in portfolios.

In classes where assessments of this kind are unusual, teachers should discuss the assessments with the students. Teachers can model the skill - act out examples - and discuss his/her use of that skill. Since many students have experienced the competitive forum of debates, rather than dialogues, it is important to give them the assessments in each chapter. These will be opportunities to internalize the criteria related to dialogue.

There are some important guidelines to follow when having students do peer assessments. Be sure to discuss how to give effective feedback before having students do a peer assessment. Giving and receiving feedback is challenging!

1. Allow students to offer self reflections first.

2. Any additional feedback from peers should be specific and about a behavior, not a judgment of the whole person. For example, let's say Sue is trying to do active listening with Ted. Sue asks some long questions that sound like she is trying to tell her own story instead of listening to Ted's story. If Ted says, "Sue, you're an awful active listener!" he is judging her too broadly for her to improve. Constructive feedback lets someone know more specifically how to do better. Ted could say, "Your questions show me that you are interested in my story, but they are pretty long, so I keep losing track of my thoughts. Next time could you ask me shorter questions?"

Participating in a formal dialogue as the culminating activity to the curriculum will allow additional assessments. Because schools do not stage dialogues, included are step-by-step directions for having a formal dialogue. These include assessment sheets.

Professional Development Support

While we wrote this curriculum to be as self-sufficient as possible, changing how one communicates and participates in a group is a developmental process. This is true for students as well as faculty. Educators for Social Responsibility conducts professional development programs to support this curriculum and many other aspects of creative conflict resolution and social responsibility. Please call our Professional Services Department for information at (617)492-1764 or (800)370-2515.

What's in the appendices?

Appendix A. An outline for staging and assessing students in a formal dialogue that involves teams and scoring.

Appendix B. Source materials that can be used as the basis for holding a formal dialogue on whether or not to require learning a foreign language.

A note about the Centerville controversy

We created stances and groups, such as Students for Equity, who are in favor of uniforms because, they say, uniforms would level some of the economic competition in school. Another group is Students for Freedom who believe in personal expression and finding deeper solutions to the problem of competition. They are against uniforms. The groups' names do not mean that some students are against equity and others against freedom. The equity argument could have meant equal access to choose what to wear; the freedom argument could have meant freedom from constant competition and clothing focus. So, as students read the story it should not be assumed that anyone is necessarily against diversity, learning, democracy, expression, equity, or many other values mentioned. It should also not be assumed that the only way to promote any of those values is via the stance presented.

Send us feedback!

This is a field test edition. We look forward to your feedback to inform our revisions for the next version of *Dialogue.* Whether you have a brief comment about one activity in particular, or have an entire journal of reactions and ideas that cover the whole curriculum, we are interested. Please consider any and all of the following questions as you use this curriculum with your students.

- To what extent is the story successful in engaging the students and demonstrating the concepts and skills?
- What suggestions do you have for individual characters or scenes?
- How did students respond to the activities?
- To what extent were the instructions and background material for teachers sufficient? Please let us know where more detail, an example, or something else would have been helpful.
- Please identify any gaps that you or your students experienced, skills that we overlooked, or skills that needed more practice.
- What connections to literature, history, or social studies can you suggest? (We will attribute any idea we include in the next edition to its contributor.)
- In what ways were you and your students successful in holding a dialogue? In what ways did you and your students struggle?

Chapter 1

Introducing Dialogue

Goals

This chapter will set the stage for the curriculum by starting a conversation about what students will assume will happen when a conflict erupts. It offers a comparison of dialogue and debate as public forms of discourse.

Vocabulary

dialogue
debate

Materials

copies of Handouts 1-1 and 1-2 for each student
journal books

Time

30 mins. for scene reading and discussion questions
30 mins. for activity 2
20-30 mins. for responding to activity 3 homework assignment

Background for Teachers

We've all had experiences when we have had to compete to get our point heard, or watched people having a repetitive argument, seemingly never really hearing each other. This chapter presents a situation to students where poor communication will be easy to imagine, and proposes that a dialogue might be a helpful structure for communicating and problem-solving.

Sometimes the structure of how we talk affects what we say and what we hear. For example, if you speak with someone on the telephone you cannot see or show facial expressions, hand gestures or any other body language. This limits the communication. In another example, an interview, one person is primarily asking, the other is primarily answering. The interviewing structure puts people in certain roles.

Similarly, if you structure communication in a debate format, you limit the kind of speaking that can happen to stating positions, and making rebuttals and counterattacks. You limit the kind of listening that takes place to listening for differences and points of disagreement, not commonalities. Debate structures the roles of the people involved to being adversaries rather than partners trying to solve a problem. Dialogue, on the other hand, is a structure for communicating to understand and learn.

This is not to say that phone calls, interviews or debates aren't useful or good ways to communicate. On the contrary, they are useful and effective for certain purposes. Telephone calls can be the best, or even the only option, when you want to communicate immediately with someone who is not nearby. Interviews are ideal for finding out information, but they are not the best for an equal exchange of information. Debates can be useful when there are only two options, no middle ground, and a choice must be made. Debates can be formal, like debates between presidential candidates, or they can be informal, like adversarial formats on television or radio talk shows, but they are adversarial nonetheless. They involve people who are listening in order to disprove, attack and win.

What would a structure for communicating look like if the goal were to understand and share ideas, create new solutions, and build relationships? It would have to be a format that used active listening rather than attack and rebuttal, and one that made room for people to talk about underlying needs rather than initial demands. People would take turns speaking and they would ask enough questions to really understand each person's ideas. They might be seated in a circle rather than opposing panels. If there is a special role for someone, they might be a facilitator, making sure everyone speaks and is heard, restating important points, noting shared concerns, rather than being a referee and time-keeper.

The activities below will encourage students to imagine what a dialogue would look like and what it would feel like to participate in one.

Activities

1. Have students read Scene 1 of the Centerville Uniform Controversy. Discuss the scene and the controversy using the questions below or others that show students' expectations about what would happen in a controversy like the one in Centerville. Encourage students to think creatively and list lots of reactions.

- What do you suppose happened once the proposal appeared in the newspaper? Can you imagine how various people in Centerville reacted? Think about students, teachers, parents and others.

- Fred Davis says "...the peer pressure is ridiculous." In what ways does peer pressure happen in your school and community? Is it "ridiculous" or easy to deal with? How can the peer pressure in your school and community lead to conflicts?

- Try to remember a controversy in your school or town. Who participated in it? Did it involve everyone or just some people? Did any one or few people take a lead role in settling the conflict? What kinds of actions were involved?

- Were the relationships among the various people in the conflict strengthened or damaged by the controversy? What might be some of the reasons for positive or negative effects on relationships?

- Was a solution reached? Did the solution satisfy everyone? Who was satisfied and who wasn't?

- Can you think of other ways a controversy might be handled?

2. Explain to students that this curriculum is dedicated to showing them a productive way of handling a controversy like the one in Centerville. It will include concepts and skills for listening, speaking, thinking, managing anger, and many other important aspects of handling conflict.

Then give students handout 1-2, the comparison of dialogue and debate. Review the chart with students. Ask them to think of debates and arguments they have watched or participated in, and compare their experiences to the qualities listed. Use any of the following questions to foster this discussion.

- What was your role in the debate or argument?

- How did you feel about your role? How did you feel about the other people involved?

- Do you think you were understood?

- Did other people have ideas that you thought were really good points? How did you respond? How did that feel?

- Was something said or done that helped everyone reach a satisfying solution? What made that work well?

- What rules would you suggest for people to solve their arguments and debates?

- What skills would you need to follow those rules?

3. Ask students to observe various forms of discussion for the next few days. They might listen to talk radio programs, family discussions, conversations among friends, or many other forms. Ask them to respond to the following questions in their journals. The questions refer to behaviors and conditions. Explain to students that behaviors can be ways of communicating, actions that people take, and so forth. Conditions might include having or not having enough time, having too many people involved, and many other factors.

Journal Questions

- What did people do and say that helped them create satisfying solutions?

- What did people do and say that kept them from creating satisfying solutions?

- How did the conditions the people were in affect their ability to create solutions?

Connections to Literature, History, Social Studies

1. If you are using this curriculum during an election season, ask students to watch a debate between political candidates. If possible watch the debate in class. Ask students to take notes on how the candidates communicate. Write the questions below on the chalk board to encourage careful observation during the debate and discussion after it.

    - What would you say are the major results of the debate?

    - Did the candidates seem to be able to put forth their full ideas? If not, why not?

    - Did they seem to be understanding each other?

    - How would you describe their relationship? What did you observe that made you describe it that way?

    - What was the goal of having this debate?

2. As an alternative to a current debate, show a video tape of the Kennedy-Nixon presidential debate.

3. Whether you find yourself in an election season or not, students can make similar studies of the communication between

commentators on many news programs, such as "Face the Nation".

4. In the play, *Inherit The Wind*, by Jerome Lawrence, have students examine the scene where the defense attorney calls the prosecuting attorney to the witness stand and questions him about his beliefs in the Bible. Ask students:

- What was the defense attorney's goal for this cross examination?
- Give examples of his speech and body language to support your assessment of his goals.

5. In the play or film, *Twelve Angry Men*, have students carefully read or watch any scene in which the jury is deliberating. Ask students:

- In what ways are they communicating well?
- In what ways could they communicate better?

Seeds of the Centerville Uniform Controversy

Fred Davis removed a magnet in the shape of a bowling pin and grabbed the calendar from his refrigerator. The calendar was one he received each year from the Centerville Bowling Lanes, with a picture from Centerville for each month: there was a picture of the bowling alley, looking much better on the calendar than it really did. There was one of Main Street, one of the duck pond in Oak Park, one of the high school, and one of the annual fundraising softball game between the police and fire departments. For the month of February there was a collage of snapshots taken at the mid-winter dance, the biggest social event of the year in Centerville. There were tiny pictures of lots of the high school students: football players, debate team members, quiet students, couples, punk rockers, and prom queens, all dressed up for the mid-winter dance, as festive as New Orleans during the Mardi Gras.

Fred was peering closely at one of those snapshots. He was trying to find himself in the background of the picture. He was a chaperone that night, stationed at the side door of the high school cafeteria. He was sure he could see part of his tweed blazer in the photo. He had felt so out of place in that jacket with the elbow patches, when everyone else was in the latest fashions and styles. Quite abruptly, Tony Taylor grabbed the calendar from him.

"Come on Fred," Tony said. "Don't take all night. Let me see." He quickly scanned the page. "I was right. The dance is on the 17th this year. Hey, everyone, I was right."

There was a small meeting happening at Fred's house for the people who would be chaperones this year. They were crowded into Fred's kitchen, munching on potato chips and sour cream dip, deciding on who would be assigned to which doors and hallways. Looking at the pictures on the calendar reminded Fred of a problem, one that he hadn't known how to bring up with his boys. Fred had two sons. Jerry was a senior at the high school. His other son, Andrew, was in the seventh grade. Fred said, "Is anyone else here thinking that maybe this mid-winter dance tradition has gone too far?" The group was suddenly quiet. Beverly Johnson's mouth was open with a chip just about to be crunched, waiting for Fred to continue. He did. "I don't mean that it's a bad thing, just that it's gotten awfully expensive these days to stay up with the fashions. Do you know where my son Jerry is right now? Upstairs studying for his mid-terms? Nope, he's doing overtime at his job to get more money for his outfit."

Fred's comment touched a nerve in these adults, a nerve that had been silently irritated through the years. No one had ever mentioned it before. Now they all wanted to talk about it. Every parent was upset that so much of their children's time, money, and energy was going into this dance. Their teenagers had been shopping for weeks to choose the perfect clothing for the event. Money that could have been saved for college was being spent on shoes! The parents were sure that homework was taking a most distant back seat to fashion.

Fred laughed a hollow chuckle. "If we lived over in Eastville my Jerry wouldn't be able to tell you the difference between polyester and silk. But here in Centerville we build up this dance, especially the expectation to get dressed up for it, until the peer pressure is ridiculous."

"And I tell you what else," Katherine Cochran said, "this obsession with clothing doesn't stop with the dance. The dance only makes it obvious. The truth is that all year long our kids think way too much about how they look. My girl Amy must spend 45 minutes every morning picking out clothing and looking at herself in the mirror. I feel bad for her--she looks tortured by it all. I wasn't like that as a teen!"

"You certainly were not!" her husband David added. Kate wasn't sure what he meant. Then again, David was color blind, so she was never sure if he noticed anything she wore.

"Not to mention gangs,". Tony Taylor warned everyone. "They get started around clothing! Sneakers! Bandannas! Jackets! I'm not going to sit on my rear and let gangs take over the streets." Silence followed.

"Well, what about proposing a uniform policy for the school?" This time it was Raymond Johnson speaking, and as usual, when he spoke in his deep voice, standing tall, people listened. "It's happening elsewhere. It might even become a law." He paused. "I say we begin to work on this here and now. I for one want things to change, and to change soon." His wife Beverly vigorously nodded her agreement.

Things happened quickly. Fred Davis pulled out paper and pens. Kate Cochran began writing. Raymond Johnson listened to ideas and organized them into clear statements that had everyone nodding with approval. In a half hour, there on Fred Davis' coffee-stained kitchen table, sat a proposal for a uniform policy. It was simple and to the point: Uniforms will be required for high school students beginning next year, and will be required for middle school students the year after that.

"It's about time parents stood up for their children," Fred Davis said to all, sitting down. "I feel good."

The next day Kate Cochran delivered their proposal to the Board of Education, as well as a copy to the local newspaper, *The Centerville Register*.

So began "The Centerville Uniform Controversy," and an education in what it takes for a community to resolve a conflict in its midst.

Dialogue	Debate[*]
Dialogue is collaborative: the sides work together.	Debate is a type of fight: two sides oppose each other to prove each other wrong.
Dialogue builds a learning relationship between people.	Debate builds a competitive relationship between people.
Dialogue encourages the participants to identify questions and goals they could share.	Debate encourages each side to articulate its own questions and goals.
In a dialogue the goals are finding common ideas and new ideas.	In a debate the goal is winning with your own ideas.
In a dialogue everyone contributes to solving a problem.	In a debate one person and viewpoint wins, the other is dismissed.
In a dialogue you believe that many solutions might exist, and that different people have parts of the best solutions.	In a debate you believe that there is one solution, that you have it, and other solutions are not considered.
In a dialogue you are sensitive to each other's feelings, hopes, and ideas.	In a debate you do not care about the feelings, hopes and ideas of others.
In a dialogue you contribute your best ideas to be improved upon.	In a debate you contribute your ideas and defend them against challenges.
In a dialogue you listen to each other to understand and build agreement.	In a debate you listen to each other to find flaws and disagree.
In a dialogue you search for the good parts of other people's ideas.	In a debate you search for weaknesses in others people's ideas.
In a dialogue you may consider new ideas and even change your mind completely.	In a debate you do not admit you are considering new ideas and you must not change your mind, or you lose.
Dialogue encourages you to evaluate yourself.	Debate encourages you to criticize others.
Dialogue promotes open-mindedness, including an openness to being wrong.	Debate creates a close-minded attitude, a determination to be right.
Dialogue encourages you to see all sides of an issue.	Debate encourages you to see only two different sides of an issue.
Dialogue invites keeping the topic open even after the discussion formally ends.	Debate, by creating a winner and a loser, discourages further discussion.

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[*] Adapted from Boston Area Educators for Social Responsibility workshop handout, BAESR, Cambridge, MA, 1985.

Chapter 2

Escalation

Goals

This chapter helps students identify ways their verbal language, body language, and actions may unknowingly attack someone else, and ways other people's verbal language, body language, and actions can distract them from the goals of a dialogue.

Vocabulary

escalate, escalating language, escalating behaviors

Materials

copies of Handout 2-1, 2-3 and 2-4 for each student
copies of Handout 2-2 for each group

Time

30 mins. scene reading and discussion questions
30-40 mins. activity 2 & 3
20 mins. activity 4
15 mins. student assessment

Background for teachers

When two (or more) people disagree on something, they are in conflict with each other. This conflict can be resolved or it can escalate. In a dialogue there will be differences of opinion, and therefore it is important that students learn to speak and act in ways that serve to retain trust, which show respect even through a disagreement, and which do not polarize people. All of the skills and concepts in this curriculum deal with resolving the conflict; the starting point is identifying escalating language and actions.

Many discussions quickly escalate into debates and arguments when individuals feel attacked or ignored. We can encourage others to feel angry - "push their buttons" - by saying words that sound insulting and disrespectful of their ideas. We can also encourage anger by many types of behaviors. It is difficult for anyone to remain committed to the ends of a dialogue when they feel attacked, whether the cause is obvious or subtle.

Attacking language comes in a variety of guises. At times attacking language is used primarily to hurt another person's feelings and has little, if anything, to do with the content of the conflict - these sorts of insults and put-downs are generally curtailed by teachers, and certain forms of attacking language, such as racist epithets, are obvious to most everyone.

In other situations the language attacks and escalates in more subtle ways. A student may dismiss another's ideas by bringing in unrelated arguments, by claiming greater expertise, or by exaggerating the views of the other person. The student may use a phrase that shows a stereotype or prejudice. Students often have the verbal ability to launch such attacks without understanding the emotional impact of their choice of words.

Body language is just as powerful in conveying an insult or attack. Students will easily be able to identify rolling one's eyes, using a loud voice, reading the newspaper during a conversation, and sighing as examples of body language which would encourage anger. Other behaviors which would keep the group from reaching a solution in a dialogue might be to use up or waste the speaking time. Students can learn to not react to other people's body language and take responsibility for their own actions.

From formal debates to class discussions to elections for school governments, schools often create forums where winning an argument in public is the goal, and thus encourage subtle forms of attacks as a means of getting an edge in the eyes of the audience of peers. The ability to recognize an attack and when one is the target of an attack can give a student an intellectual tool to avoid retaliating in kind. In certain situations, the ability to avoid attacking can be a life-saving skill, allowing a student to walk away from hostile aggressors. In all situations, avoiding attacking language and actions will help sustain learning, working, and personal relationships.

Some of the statements in the Centerville scenes and handouts demonstrate attacks based on prejudice or stereotypes. When characters say such phrases as, "All you adults never listen," "What do you care about clothes - you're a guy," or "Everyone who lives up on the hill has money for clothes," they are showing that they have grouped individuals together, assigned a characteristic to everyone in the group, and hold a value judgment of that group. Help students understand that prejudices and stereotypes, whether they are intentional or not, can cause people to feel attacked and misunderstood.

For further exploration of the concepts of escalation, stereotypes and prejudice, please see *Conflict Resolution in the Middle School* by William J. Kreidler, or *Making Choices about Conflict, Security, and Peacemaking* by Carol Miller Lieber, both published by Educators for Social Responsibility.

Activities

1. Have students read Scene Two of the Centerville Uniform Controversy. The following questions can be used after reading it to help the students understand how certain words and phrases turn potential dialogues into debates.

- Which of the words and phrases that Chuck Petner said might have really upset Katherine Cochran's mother?
- If Chuck Petner knew that Katherine Cochran's mother was there and if he didn't want to make her so upset, in what other ways could he have stated his opinion?
- Look at what Katherine Cochran's mother said to Chuck Petner and how she approached him. What might her words and body language make him think? What might they make him feel? Which words or actions might bring on those thoughts and feelings?
- Which of Todd Smith's words and way of speaking do you think provoked Joey Petner?
- What does Joey Petner do that may bring on an argument - and perhaps a fight - rather than a dialogue? What do his words show?

2. Students will note how language, behavior, and attitudes shown through language serve to escalate the Centerville controversy. Divide students into small groups where they will read and discuss the series of statements in the handout "Words Are Making Things Worse at Centerville High." Ask students to read aloud each statement and then discuss the ways that each statement could start an argument, rather than a dialogue.

- What are the words and phrases in each statement that encourage anger? Why do they often have that effect?
- How do you imagine the statement was delivered? How might the style of speaking encourage the conflict to escalate?
- What attitudes does the statement show? How might those attitudes contribute to the conflict?

3. Debrief the small group work as a whole class. After discussing all the statements, bring the class together again through a discussion based on the following questions.

- What makes a statement come across as an attack?
- Can we organize these statements into categories? What types of things do people say to each other that bring on arguments?
- What actions serve to escalate a conflict?

Have the class create a list on the board as they answer the last two questions above. They can then add any other types of statements and behaviors they know that provoke arguments. You may also add such categories as:

- generalizations ("You *never ever* show up on time *anywhere*"),
- bringing up the past ("You did the same thing to me in third grade"),
- body language (rolling eyes, sighing),
- insults ("You are so naive"), and
- stereotypes and remarks based on prejudice ("All you...").

4. Distribute and read the second handout, "Language That Escalates."

- Do all of these statements belong in the categories we've developed? If not, what other categories do we need to add to our list?
- What do people say and do to each other at our school that sometimes start arguments?

5. Journal Questions

- If you were talking with a classmate about a school uniform rule, what statements or behaviors might make you angry?
- Over a few days, listen for language and watch for actions used by teachers, classmates, yourself, and others that has an escalating effect. What are some of the phrases you heard or actions you saw? What are some of the phrases or actions you used?

Connections to Literature, History, Social Studies

1. Using any novel, short story or play have students observe the role of escalating language, actions and attitudes. Students can make lists of these factors and categorize them to understand the role they play in conflict. They can also observe escalating factors to understand patterns of behavior of certain characters. Further they can graph the escalating behaviors on a conflict escalator (like a staircase) to distinguish more and less dramatic steps that serve to heighten the conflict as well as attempts to step down or off the escalator.

For example, if students are reading *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*, by Mildred Taylor, have them examine the scene of Cassie's first trip to Mr. Barnett's store (chapter 5). Students can observe escalating behaviors, who is using what type of escalating language, and graph the escalation on a conflict escalator.

The same activity can be done with the Tom's first challenge and fight in chapter 1 of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, by Mark Twain.

In chapter 4 of *Black Boy*, by Richard Wright, students will see that one character, the aunt, can escalate a conflict even when the other, the narrator, is trying to de-escalate.

2. Have students read The Declaration of Independence and identify the escalating steps as well as the escalating language in the document.

3. Students can identify escalating actions for any historical occurrence, be it a war, a mass movement, or a particular event. For example, for the Civil War, students may identify the Missouri Compromise, the Dred Scott case, John Brown's capture and trial, the election of Lincoln as president, and so on.

4. Students can use the "Eyes on the Prize" video series or other resources about the Civil Rights Movement and consider the different roles of reactive violent escalation versus deliberate non-violent escalation.

The News Spreads...and So Does Conflict

Centerville is not a big city. The town has three elementary schools, a medium size library, and one business district. Many people have lived their entire lives there, which also means that almost everyone has gone to the Centerville Schools and has memories of their own mid-winter dances.

Katherine Cochran delivered the school uniform proposal to the Board of Education office and before she had even left town hall, the Board's secretary had called her neighbor about it, who called her brother, who announced the proposal to the group of workers having lunch in the doughnut shop downtown.

"I know this Katherine Cochran person," Chuck Petner said, sitting at the counter at the doughnut shop, talking to no one in particular, "and frankly I think she should keep her big nose out of other people's business. Let the kids be kids."

Almost before the words had left his mouth an elderly woman marched up to him. Her back was straight and proud, and her expression was determined, making her look taller and younger than her years. "Listen here, buddy," she practically shouted, "I know Katherine Cochran, too. She's my daughter. And it's irresponsible attitudes like yours that are causing all the problems with kids today!"

Later that morning Katherine Cochran handed a copy of the proposal to the newspaper. The editor then called the principal of the high school (to get a quote for the article), who told the assistant principal, who told the secretary. Outside the secretary's office sat three students in detention, who heard the whole thing. One quietly slipped out into the hallway and announced the proposal to the group of students waiting outside the gymnasium while the doors were being opened.

Todd Smith's reaction practically exploded out of him. "A uniform rule?! Have the Nazis taken over here? This is Centerville High School, not a fascist country. This is the stupidest idea I have ever heard!"

"You think everyone has as much money as you to buy all the newest clothes?!" Joey Petner slowly, almost ominously, walked towards Todd. Everyone was surprised. Joey rarely said anything, sitting in the back of classes, his leather jacket pulled up to his chin. "Not everyone lives up on the hill like you!" His face was a foot from Todd's when the teacher suddenly threw open the gym doors.

Throughout Centerville that night, around dinner tables, at the local Y, at the churches, and in the waiting rooms of doctor's offices and the lobbies of movie theaters, voices were being raised and fingers jabbed in faces as points of view met and clashed with other points of view. Few people knew the details of the proposal and it seemed everyone had already formed a strong opinion.

Words Are Making Things Worse at Centerville High

In the days after the parents suggested the uniform rule, people were discussing it all over school. There were many strong opinions and feelings. The following statements were overheard in the hallways, cafeteria, and classrooms. After each of the statements was said a heated argument began and people walked away more angry and divided than ever.

What is it in each of these statements that people are getting so angry about? What are the words and phrases in each statement that encourage strong reactions? Why do they often have that effect?

1. "What are you going to do if I don't wear the uniform? Throw me in jail? Go ahead and try."

2. "Right, first it's all of us have to dress the same way. Then it's going to be the same haircuts for everyone, then you'll want all of us to speak with the same accent. Once you start this, you won't stop."

3. "Why don't you wake up and look around? Kids are working all sorts of overtime at their jobs and even missing school so they can work more just to afford the latest fashions. You tell me which is more important -- clothing or a good education?!"

4. "For once, if we had uniforms, I'd feel like a regular kid. I'm so sick of my brother's old, worn out hand-me-downs. I'm always behind the times when it comes to fashions! If you bothered to pay attention to me you might care how I feel!"

5. "This is just like last year when you wouldn't even consider my idea about improving the traffic flow in the parking lot!"

6. "It's just that all you old people don't like how the world is, and the only thing you can control is how teenagers dress, so that's what you target. It won't change anything."

7. "Why don't you give the uniform rule a chance? Why are you so stubborn?"

8. "Leave me out of this. I'll wear what I want and think what I want. Mind your own business!"

9. "Ever since you were in the third grade when you won that spelling bee you thought you knew better than everyone else!"

10. "It's one thing to have individuality; it's another to allow and even encourage all this competition for dressing up that really divides people."

11. "I can just imagine what sort of uniform you'll put on us. We'll all look like little Ken™ and Barbie™ dolls. That's not how my family dresses. How would you like it if you had to wear a kimono or a kilt everyday? You people in power think you're so perfect."

12. "You're a guy! What do you care about clothes?! You practically wear the same thing every day anyway. But you sure have a lot of opinions about girls' clothes!"

Language That Escalates

Here are some common statements that provoke people into arguments instead of dialogues. In what ways do the statements below push people to feel angry with each other?

a. "You never ever listen to anything that anyone else says."

b. "Children should be seen and not heard."

c. "I know you told me that secret but I just had to tell your parents."

d. "You've messed up before and you'll probably mess up again."

e. "I've forgotten more than you'll ever know."

f. "You're being mean to me just like last week when you were mean to your little brother."

g. "You're a wimp."

h. "I don't know why you're so upset by such a little thing."

i. "What's your problem? Do you have trouble understanding English?"

Escalation: Student Assessment

My name:______________________

What words do people say to you that make things worse when you are having a discussion or argument?

What actions do people do that make things worse for you?

What words or phrases can make things escalate in a discussion or argument if you say them to your teachers in this school? What actions can make things escalate?

What are the types of things students say or do to each other in discussions and arguments that make things escalate?

In what ways can knowing all of the things you wrote above help you when you are having discussions, dialogues, and arguments?

Chapter 3

Managing Anger

Goals

In this chapter students will consider ways of managing their own anger so that they can maintain the goal of a dialogue: to solve the problem and build community.

Vocabulary

anger reducers
anger cues
many different words which represent feelings

Materials

copies of Handout 3-1 and 3-3 for each student
copies of Handout 3-2 for each group

Time

30 mins. scene reading and discussion questions
30 mins. activity 2
30 mins. activity 3
15 mins. activity 4

Background for Teachers

In the previous chapter students considered the types of statements that can provoke someone into a debate rather than a dialogue. Those statements frequently result in people feeling strong emotions: embarrassed, humiliated, attacked, and of course, angry. Feeling anger is natural, but without ways of managing emotions, people can say and do things that undermine a constructive conversation. Many students have a limited repertoire of ways to manage their anger.

The limited repertoire of managing anger often leads students to say, "I had to hit him" or other aggressive reactions to their own feelings. In a discussion, the "hit" will come in the form of a verbal insult and attack, escalating both participants' anger, and decreasing the desire to build solutions.

In the absence of practiced, non-aggressive reactions to anger, many students will feel as if they are giving in and "losing." In many communities and families, it is considered a dangerous sign of weakness to not retaliate. Mass media has likely further influenced students to identify aggression as the best or even the only response to anger.

It is very difficult for students to adopt new ways of managing their anger in the heat of the moment. Most people learn best when they feel neither threatened nor anxious, especially when they are learning about their own emotions. Students need time and safety to consider the efficacy of new approaches, and to practice the new approaches so that they can become personalized into students' own style. Choosing to be non-aggressive does not mean you are avoiding the conflict or giving in; it means you are making the best choice for the situation rather than being limited to a single conditioned response.

Developing a non-aggressive approach to managing anger starts with an awareness of one's own anger. Many students are not aware of their own emotions until the emotions are very dramatic; others have only the most extreme language or swearing to describe their emotions. In either of these cases, students can improve their skills. If they become more aware of their emotions, even the subtle ones and early signs, they can choose how to handle themselves. They can say what they are feeling rather than demonstrating it. For example, if a students can say, "I'm feeling frustrated," they might not have to act it out. Further, if they have a wide array of constructive words for describing their feelings, they can more easily diffuse their own anger and not escalate the conflict.

Students also need a range of options which will help them diffuse. There are many to choose from, depending on the time and place: counting to ten; asking the other person to repeat what they have just said; momentarily imagining yourself in a calm environment; saying you are sorry for the things you are truly responsible for; performing strenuous physical activity; taking three slow deep breaths; writing a letter; talking to a friend; listening to music - the list is long, and the best choices for each person will be unique.

One of the ways teachers can help students manage anger is by developing with students a menu of choices appropriate to the school setting, and encouraging students to choose from that menu when they are clearly very angry. Some schools have established "cool out zones" where students go to manage their anger without making things worse, and get complimented for making such a choice. With students who have particularly hard times managing their anger, a one-to-one conference can help them design their own anger management contract, and give them a chance to practice their new choices.

None of this is to say that anger isn't valid and should be repressed or avoided. To the contrary, these skills can give students more confidence in handling strong emotions, and thus more willingness to do so. As with all of conflict resolution, having more skills offers more choices.

Activities

1. Have students read Scene Three of the Centerville Uniform Controversy. The following questions can be used after reading the scene to help students consider their options when they feel angry.

- What emotions do you think Andrew is feeling? What are the signs that tell you he is feeling strong emotions?

- What emotions do you think Cheryl is feeling? What are the signs that tell you she is feeling strong emotions?

- In what ways is Andrew managing his anger about having to ride the bus? What's helpful and not helpful about his choices?

- Andrew knows that if he gets into a big argument or fight with Cheryl he will probably be suspended from the bus route and then grounded by his father. What does he do (or not do) to handle the situation? What is helpful and not so helpful in managing this difficult confrontation?

- Can you think of anything good that Andrew got from punching the bus? How do those good things compare to the pain and damage to his hand? What else could he have tried?

2. Give students Handout 3-2, "Evaluating The Ways The Citizens of Centerville Manage Anger." Have students work in small groups to assess the benefits and drawbacks of how each character has dealt with his or her anger.

3. Next give students Handout 3-3, "A Microlab on Managing Anger." Have students work individually and silently on the first task. Give them a few minutes to reflect and write.

Then explain the following microlab structure.
- Each student has one minute to describe the cues (physical signs) that tell them they are getting angry.
- You will call out when each minute is over.

- This is not a discussion. When one student is speaking nobody can ask questions or voice agreement or disagreement or any comment at all. They will just listen as attentively as possible.
- Debrief with the whole class by asking for some of the cues that were described. Then ask students, how might it be helpful to them to know what their anger cues are?

- Have students return to the microlab format and describe his or her way of reducing anger.

After everyone has had a turn, ask students to discuss the third task on the handout as a group and take notes on the discussion. Give students about 10 minutes for this task.

Then on a sheet of easel paper write the question, "When you are having a dialogue or a discussion, how can you manage your anger so that you can be successful?" Ask each of the small groups to identify their best ways of dealing with anger. Write these on the easel paper and hang the sheet on the wall for future reference.

Finally, have each student write his or her answers for the fourth task. Some students may need to do this in silence, while others may need to chat with a friend to give their own best answers. *This fourth task can be used as an assessment of students' understanding of managing anger.*

4. You may also want to ask students about how they experienced the microlab format.

- How did it feel to listen without interrupting? Was it difficult even though it was only for a minute?

- How did it feel when you were the speaker?

Many students will express some discomfort. Maybe they wanted some feedback or to voice a reaction. Encourage them to be open to the format; it will be used again later. Remind them that a great deal of communication is not verbal, and sometimes the most attentive form of listening is silent. It can take a while to learn to be a really good listener and many of us are not accustomed to really being heard.

Connections to Literature, History, Social Studies

1. Using any novel, short story or play, have students identify the emotions characters seem to be feeling. They can look for what evoked the emotion as well as what actions followed the emotions. This will give students a deeper understanding of the characters' motivations, decisions, and points of view. It also may prompt more empathy for unsympathetic characters.

2. Watch an interview, speech, or political talk show on television. Have students watch for the speaker's emotions and attempts to keep them in check.

3. With students, read the first chapter of the book, *Talking Peace*, by Jimmy Carter, and watch the role of personal anger in the Camp David Peace Conference.

Bloody Knuckles

Andrew Davis hated the bus ride home from school. He had pleaded with his father to let him walk to school. His older brother Jerry walked to high school, and that was even farther away from home than the middle school, but Andrew was the younger brother, and nothing he did was as good as what Jerry could do. So he sat in the back of the bus. He made funny faces at people in the cars. He threw paper at the kids he didn't like. He shouted insults at the bus driver and then ducked down so he couldn't be seen. Yesterday he had been warned by the assistant principal that he would lose his privilege to ride the bus if there were any more problems. Great, Andrew thought. Then his Dad threatened to ground him as long as he was not allowed on the bus. Not so great, he thought.

On this day he was drawing in his notebook when Cheryl Wells interrupted him. It was a smart idea to be on Cheryl's good side. She had a reputation for being tough, and she wouldn't back down from anybody. Andrew thought Cheryl liked him because he made her laugh during their boring homeroom. "Why does your family think it should tell me how to dress for school?" She had her hands on her hips, not a good sign, and she was staring down at him as the bus bounced along towards his stop.

Andrew could feel his shoulders get tense. "It's not my family. It's just my Dad."

"Well, why don't you tell him to mind his own business? Or maybe I'll go over to your house and teach him a lesson." A few other kids were turning their heads, watching and listening to Cheryl.

The bus driver took a long look in his rearview mirror. "Hey, Andrew Davis, is that you starting trouble again?"

Why doesn't everyone just leave me alone? Andrew thought. I hate this bus ride. I hate this bus ride.

"His whole family is causing trouble!" Cheryl shouted. All the kids laughed. Cheryl gave him a long look and then slowly walked away, back to her seat, waving the back of her hand at Andrew as if she were swatting away a pesky mosquito. Her friends laughed some more.

The bus stopped at Andrew's corner. He jumped up, took a deep breath, and stared straight ahead. The walk up the aisle to the front of the bus seemed to take forever. When he got to the front the driver glared at him and said, "Your days on this bus are numbered if you don't get a better attitude."

Andrew stomped off the bus. When he passed under Cheryl's window she stuck her tongue out at him. Andrew balled up his hand and punched the side of the bus. It hurt more than he could have imagined. He waited until the bus pulled away and then sat on the curb, the knuckles of his hand bloody, tears in his eyes.

"Andrew? Are you okay?" His brother's friend, Amy Cochran, put her hand on his shoulder. What he most wanted to do was say, "Sure, I'm okay." But his hand was throbbing and in so much pain and he was miserable and despite his best efforts not to, he cried.

Amy sat next to him. She asked him to tell her what happened. He did.

"Well, at least you didn't punch the bus driver!" she said. "And you didn't punch Cheryl, which is even smarter. You did okay for being so angry."

"Yeah right," Andrew said quietly. "I've probably broken my hand by doing okay."

Amy rubbed his shoulder. "It's not easy knowing what to do when you're so angry. You didn't make things worse...except for your hand. Come on. I'll walk you home."

Evaluating The Ways The Citizens of Centerville Manage Anger

Below you will read the ways that various citizens of Centerville sometimes manage their anger. After each example fill in what the risks might be of managing anger in such a fashion. Then fill in what ways, if any, their actions will help them with their problems.

1. After getting a failing grade on a test, Joey Petner takes his motorcycle to the highway and races it at 80 m.p.h. The next day he cleans and polishes every inch of it.

Risks of managing anger this way	How managing anger this way helps

2. Fred Davis has a horrible night in his bowling league and his teammates barely say good-bye. He stays up until 4 a.m. reviewing his performance.

Risks of managing anger this way	How managing anger this way helps

3. Tony Taylor's neighbor yells at him over their fence to take better care of his front yard. Tony yells back, "You wanna come over hear and say that to my face?"

Risks of managing anger this way	How managing anger this way helps

4. Amy Cochran goes on a date to a movie. The young man keeps leaning against her. She says in a loud voice, "I wish you wouldn't lean on me so much!"

Risks of managing anger this way	How managing anger this way helps

5. A customer at the restaurant where Jerry Davis is a waiter threatens to tell the boss that Jerry is doing a bad job if she doesn't get her food right away. Jerry takes a deep breath in and out and says very slowly, "I'll check with the kitchen and get right back to you."

Risks of managing anger this way	How managing anger this way helps

6. While driving home from work, Raymond Johnson is pulled over by a police officer. First he is told that his left turn signal is not working. Then he is kept waiting 10 minutes while the officer checks his registration and license. Raymond Johnson slowly counts to ten and says nothing. When he gets home he puts on his sweat suit and takes a fast run through the neighborhood.

Risks of managing anger this way	How managing anger this way helps

7. Todd Smith gets a rejection letter from a college. He slams shut the door to his room and plays music loud enough to shake the walls.

Risks of managing anger this way	How managing anger this way helps

8. Katherine Cochran gets a telephone call at the movie theater that she manages. The person on the phone says, "Do you have any idea what kind of junk is in those movies you show? Or is all you care about making money?" Katherine puts her hand on her warm cup of tea and closes her eyes for just a moment. Then she says, "Tell me more about what's upsetting you."

Risks of managing anger this way	How managing anger this way helps

A Microlab on Managing Anger

1. Preparing for the microlab
In the space below list the cues (the physical signs) that tell you you are feeling angry, and the ways that you deal with anger. Underline the way that you think works best to manage your anger and write about why that is the best way.

2. Holding the microlab
Bring this sheet to your microlab group. Each student will have a full minute to talk about his or her cues and ways of managing anger. There will be no interruptions. When it is your turn you may either read directly from the sheet or talk about what you have written.

3. Compiling the data from the microlab
After everyone has had a turn, discuss the following question in your microlab group: When you are having a dialogue or a discussion, how can you manage your anger so that you can be successful?

Collect the group's answers below.

4. Evaluating your choices from the microlab
From your microlab collection, choose two ways for managing anger in a dialogue or discussion that might work best for you. Write those two choices below:

One way I might manage anger in a discussion or dialogue is:

The reason I like this way is:

A second way I might manage anger in a discussion or dialogue is:

The reason I like this way is:

Now, from the microlab collection, choose two ways for managing anger in a dialogue or discussion that might *not* work for you. Write those two choices below:

One way that won't help me to manage anger in a discussion or dialogue is:

The reason I don't like this way is:

A second way that won't help me to manage anger in a discussion or dialogue is:

The reason I don't like this way is:

Chapter 4

Using "I Statements"

Goals

In the following activities students will compare the effects of speaking from one's own perspective, particularly through "I Statements," to other forms of communicating and will practice creating "I Statements" within a dialogue context.

Vocabulary

I statements
you statements
perspective

Materials

copies of Handout 4-1, 4-2, 4-3 and 4-4 for each student

Time

30 mins. scene reading and discussion questions
15-30 mins. activity 2 & 3
30-45 mins. activity 4
20 mins. student assessment form
15 mins. activity 5--additional practice

Background for Teachers

Many potential discussions and dialogues turn into arguments when people feel attacked, misinterpreted, or feel that their values and beliefs are being denigrated. These attacks often come in the form of a "you statement," such as : "You don't know what you are talking about;" "You're not listening;" "You are so naive;" or "You believe that (whatever)."

"I statements" are a way of communicating clearly and directly without blaming or attacking the other person. They have a simple basic structure:
I feel ______________________ (name the emotion)
when ______________________ (name the behavior)
because ______________________ (describe the effect of the behavior on you)
and I would like ______________________ . What do you think?

Here is an example. You are speaking with a friend who interrupts you frequently and you don't like the interruptions. You could use a "you statement," such as,

> "You keep interrupting me. You're being disrespectful. You're not bothering to listen to me. Stop it!"

Or you could use an "I statement" and say,

> "I feel aggravated when you interrupt me because I lose my train of thought. I'd like to hear your reactions when I finish my story. Is that okay?"

Both styles might stop the interruptions, but the "you statement" is blameful ("You're being disrespectful"), assumes an understanding of the other person's thoughts and emotions ("You're not bothering to listen to me"), and tries to control that person's behavior ("Stop it!"). All of these invite a power struggle over the definition of what happened and who controls what happens next. The "you statement" might stop not only the interruptions; it might end the whole conversation and even hurt the friendship.

The "I statement" offers your friend a more graceful opportunity to do what you'd like. Through the "I statement" you describe your own experience, giving them information (which perhaps they didn't have before) and they can now choose their own behavior.

Speaking from one's own perspective in this manner can communicate feelings and information without turning a dialogue into an argument. It is a way for people to express concern that they have been misunderstood and attacked without attacking back, and thus maintain the respectful attitude needed for a dialogue to continue.

"I statements" can also be used to give compliments and positive feedback. Note the difference between a "you statement" compliment and an "I statement" version: "You are such a good boy," versus "I really appreciate it when you help me." The "you statement" is general rather than specific, a judgment of another rather than a description of oneself. A "you statement" - even when it's positive - can sound condescending.

One of the underlying reasons for using "I statements" is the belief that a person can only really speak for him or herself. When someone uses a "you statement" she is assuming she is able to represent another person's experience. In the "you statement" example above the speaker is pointing a finger at her interrupting listener, condemning the behavior, and assuming the listener feels disrespect. Yet, the listener may have thought her interruptions were fun or encouraging. Even if the listener is feeling disrespect, by using a "you statement" the speaker is showing disrespect as well. "I statements" help the speaker describe his or her own feelings, thoughts, and experiences, rather than those of another person.

Encourage students to use other forms of speaking from one's own perspective as well. They can assertively state what they believe or need with statements that start with such phrases as, "In my experience...," "I see it this way...," "I think...," "What I really need here is...," or many others. Also encourage students to speak rather than to withdraw or just go along. "I'm uncomfortable with...," or "No, I don't think that is ok," can be vital statements to learn to say.

Activities

1. **Have students read Scene 4 of the Centerville Uniform Controversy.** The following questions can be used after students read it to help them begin to understand the ways that "you statements" can create arguments.

   - What does Jerry say about Ms. Roberts that may not be true?
   - What does Ms. Roberts say about Jerry that may not be true?
   - What did Jerry find out about Ms. Roberts' beliefs regarding the uniform rule?
   - What did Ms. Roberts find out about Jerry's beliefs regarding the uniform rule?
   - What things made this dialogue turn into an argument?
   - What might happen as a result of this argument?

2. **Ask two volunteers to read the student handout, "Ms. Roberts and Jerry Try Again." Lead a discussion with the following questions.**

   - What helped this dialogue go more smoothly than the previous scene with Jerry and Ms. Roberts?
   - What might happen as a result of this dialogue?

3. Explain that in Scene 4, Jerry and Ms. Roberts speak with "you statements," and in the handout, "Ms. Roberts and Jerry Try Again," they speak from their own perspectives, especially

through "I statements." Through small group discussions or quiet list making, **have students consider the different results one can get from using a "you statement" and an "I statement."** Review these differences with the whole class.

There are many important differences. A few to note are below.

- **"You Statements"** tend to escalate conflicts. The other person feels attacked so they try to defend themselves or retaliate with a counterattack. "You Statements" are like a big finger pointing and poking at the other person. That person tries to defend themselves from the poking, pointing finger.
- With an **"I Statement"**, the speaker communicates his or her feelings instead of attacking the other person, being silent or avoiding the problem. He is more likely to make specific constructive suggestions and take responsibility for what he can control (himself). The speaker is also pushed to clarify his own thoughts and feelings.

4. Prior to distributing the student handout, "Practicing Using 'I Statements' in a Dialogue," share with them - you may want to write it on the board or have it on easel paper for display - that "I statements" take the following form.

I feel ____________________
when ____________________
because ____________________
and I would like ____________________ .
What do you think?

They don't have to follow this form exactly, but it's useful to learn the form first, then experiment. For instance, instead of saying "I feel aggravated," a person could say "I get aggravated" or many other variations. It is important that the thought be sincere, so varying from the form is fine as long as the statement is still describing your own experience. Also, at first the format may feel artificial. That's natural. New skills often feel phony at first.

In small groups have the students complete the worksheet "Practicing Using 'I Statements' in a Dialogue." There are ten practice situations on this worksheet, and depending on the time available and the amount of practice students need, this activity can be shortened by assigning only half the situations, or by assigning some for homework. After completing the task, have students share the "I Statements" they have developed. As each student shares, the rest of the students should listen carefully to detect any subtle "you statements" that have slipped into the responses. How would they would feel if the "I Statement" were directed at them?

5. Additional practice

A. Pair-up students, and have them practice making "you statements" and "I statements" with the scenarios below. After each scenario ask the pairs to share with the group their different statements, and the possible results of using the different statements.

- Your friend calls you a wimp because you don't want to smoke cigarettes.
- Your teacher calls on you and you haven't been paying attention.
- A parent notices that you have gotten dressed up to go out with friends.

B. Have the students keep track of the number of "I statements" you and they make during a subsequent class period. While evoking a lot of laughter, they, and you, will also get practice using the form in context. You may also have the opportunity to point out how awkward a new communication skill can feel until they get used to it and adapt it into their own personal way of talking.

Connections to Literature, History, Social Studies

1. Write "I statements" for characters in novels, short stories or plays as a way of expressing themselves clearly. For example:

In *Raisin in the Sun*, by Lorraine Hansberry, students can write an "I statement" for Walter Younger to explain to his mother why he wants to open a liquor store.

In *Ordinary People*, by Judith Guest, choose a spot where the surviving son could make an effective "I statement" to his mother. Write the statement.

In Act 2, Scene 4 of the play, *Fences*, by August Wilson, have students rewrite the interchange between the father and son using "I statements."

2. Have students read the short story, "A Small Good Thing," by Raymond Carver, and ask them to observe the change in the relationship between the baker and the mother when the baker starts to speak from his own perspective and include "I statements."

3. Have students read documents, passages, or speeches and examine the impact of the character or historical figure speaking from his or her own perspective. Examples are:

- in *The Tempest*, by William Shakespeare, when Caliban pleads to Prospero to recognize his humanity
- Sojourner Truth's "Ain't I A Woman" speech
- Martin Luther King's "Letter from a Birmingham Jail"
- Black Elk's "I will fight no more" speech
- Henry David Thoreau's "Where I Lived and What I Lived For" chapter from *Walden*.

A Failure To Communicate

The uniform proposal meant little to Jerry Davis. He was a senior and would graduate before the rule went into effect. He had a job. He worried about saving money for tuition for college. But when his little brother Andrew snuck through their backdoor with bloody knuckles and a tear stained face, Jerry became furious. Growing up was hard enough for Andrew, who was small and thin, funny and always getting in trouble because of it, and who never got enough attention from their dad. Jerry wondered why the adults couldn't leave the kids alone.

Jerry found himself impatient, easily frustrated. Little things irritated him: Why did the lead in mechanical pencils break so easily? Why didn't the manager of the baseball team realize how ridiculous he looked in a uniform? Why didn't teachers admit that they were once kids too?

He was sitting in his afternoon study hall in the cold and uncomfortable cafeteria. He couldn't remember the rules for making the past tense in Spanish. His pencil was making big swirls in his notebook and the clocks on the walls were broken. He stared out a window, watching a cloud drift across the blue autumn sky.

"Jerry?" It was Ms. Roberts, his science teacher. He closed his notebook and looked up at her. What could she want? He had finished his last lab report. "What do you think of the uniform rule, Jerry?"

"I think it's stupid, really stupid. I mean really, really stupid, you know?" Jerry pictured Andrew walking home with his hand all bloody. What a mess the adults were making. "Incredibly stupid...adults." He muttered the last word.

"Don't you mutter at me." Her tone was more of a warning than a threat. Had she heard what he said there at the end? Ms. Roberts was by far the fairest, toughest, most demanding and also the least amusing teacher. When you were in her class there was no time for fooling around. "I suggest you find another way to say what you have to say." She had heard. She stared at him. "You don't want me calling your father in here."

No, he thought, this is not about my father. It's about....He didn't even know what it was about anymore. "You just don't want to hear any student's point of view. And don't bring my father into this. You don't know him."

Ms. Roberts spoke in a very even and steady voice. "You're being disrespectful. Young people have to learn how to live within the rules." She turned to walk away.

Jerry called after her. He could feel his frustration rising and he felt trapped by it. "You think anyone who disagrees with you is disrespectful. Just because I'm not an adult, you think you can dictate my life. Adults do this all the time."

"You're far too upset to talk with me." Ms. Roberts was reaching her limit. Her lab had been broken into during the last weekend. The principal was pressuring her to chair the uniform committee. And now even Jerry Davis, one of the most sincere and helpful students in the senior class, was being rude and confrontational. "You don't know what I think," she said. "You haven't thought through the issues. And you aren't old enough to understand how things have changed in Centerville."

As if being older made you right!, Jerry thought harshly. "I'll bet you'd agree with any proposal that..." He didn't even know what he wanted to say. He just waved both hands at Ms. Roberts in despair, hoping she'd leave him alone before he was in even worse shape.

Why am I arguing with this boy? Ms. Roberts asked herself. She ran her hand through her hair. She pulled off her glasses, fumbled in the pocket of her skirt searching for a kerchief, and delicately wiped the glasses clean. "Let's take a break, Jerry. We need to cool off."

Ms. Roberts and Jerry Try Again

Ms. Roberts waits fifteen minutes and approaches Jerry again.

Ms. Roberts: Jerry, I'm ready to try again to have a discussion about the uniform rule. And I am sorry I brought your father into the discussion.

Jerry: Thanks. He and I are having some difficulties these days - it's a sore subject for me. I don't know where to begin.... Can you start?

Ms. Roberts: Sure. Jerry, when you said the uniform rule was stupid, it made me upset because people I know and trust put a lot of time into thinking about it.

Jerry: And it made me upset when you said I was being disrespectful because I have strong opinions about this rule. It's not about you. I hope you believe me.

Ms. Roberts: Could you tell me what you meant by the rule being stupid? I don't know what that word means to you. To me, when someone uses that word about something important that's going on in our community, it's disrespectful. Especially when it's a student. And I don't like being spoken to like that. I would like you to not mumble when you speak to me. If you have something to say I'd like you to say it to me directly.

Jerry: I just meant that I don't think a uniform rule will do any good, and that it will make a lot of students angry. It makes me angry! My little brother almost broke his hand it made him so angry. He doesn't understand.

Ms. Roberts: I agree that it will make some students angry. But I'm concerned about all the competition around the school to dress up, not to mention gangs. My lab was broken into, and that upsets me. I don't like the direction of things.

Jerry: I live around here. I don't want gangs or people breaking into places. It's just when adults makes rules on their own that they think will help kids, it...it makes me angry, okay?

Ms. Roberts: I hear you. I wouldn't want a uniform for teachers. But I still think there are some good reasons to have a uniform rule for students.

Jerry: I'll agree there's a problem sometimes around here with some of the kids. But I never had a problem. I always worked for my clothes money and I get decent grades.

Ms. Roberts: I don't think you're the problem here either, Jerry.

Practicing Using "I Statements" in a Dialogue

Let's say you are trying to have a serious problem-solving discussion, a dialogue, with someone. In the process, each of the statements or situations below are said to you or occur. Construct a response in an "I Statement" format, or a variation of the format. The most important aspect is that your statement is about you, not the person with whom you are speaking. Remember the basic format:

"I feel ____________ when _________________ because ______________ and
I would like _______________________________________. What do you think?"

1. "You haven't studied the problem as much as I have."

2. Someone giggles after you make a contribution to the dialogue.

3. You ask a question of the other team and they do not really answer it.

4. "You're not listening to me at all."

5. During the dialogue, the other team looks at the judges and the audience instead of at you when they are speaking.

6. "I really appreciate hearing your point of view. Thanks."

7. "Ninety percent of the people would completely disagree with you. Doesn't that tell you something about your views?"

8. "You only see your side of the problem. You're not understanding my point of view."

9. "That idea is absolutely impossible."

10. Someone on the other team rolls his eyes and shakes his head while you are speaking.

"I Statements": Student Assessment

My name:______________________________

1. From all the "I Statements" used during this activity, the one I thought was best was:

Did it have any "you statements" in it?

Was it said or written clearly?

Did it use a realistic feeling?

Did it have a specific reason for the feeling?

Did it make a reasonable request?

Could you improve it in any way? If so, write the improvement below:

2. An "I Statement" I heard that could be improved was:

Did it have any "you statements" in it?

Was it said or written clearly?

Did it use a realistic feeling?

Did it have a specific reason for the feeling?

Did it make a reasonable request?

Could you improve it in any way? If so, write the improvement below:

Chapter 5

Reducing the Bias in Language

Goals

Students will learn about bias in language and understand that
- bias in language, whether in questions or statements, can effect a discussion
- biased questions encourage certain answers and therefore limit what is to be discovered and learned
- a discussion filled with biased language serves to polarize the topic, rather than expose its full complexity.

Vocabulary

bias
open-ended questions
close-ended questions

Materials

copies of Handout 5-1 for each student
copies of Handout 5-2 for each group
paper
newspapers or magazines (for homework or in class)

Time

45-60 mins. scene reading and discussion questions
45 mins. activity 2, 3 & 4
15-30 mins. activity 5

Background for Teachers

Several chapters in this curriculum focus on the use of language in discussing controversial topics - words that trigger anger, "I Statements" which help to avoid attacks and blamefulness, active listening which encourages sharing of information, and others. This chapter focuses on language and its power to polarize a topic and limit its discussion. It is very difficult to gather responsible information or hold an open dialogue on any issue if the people gathering the information or discussing the topic use heavily biased language.

The activities in this chapter explore the concept of bias in language. The chapter uses questions and statements on surveys created by the different Centerville groups to allow students to sense their own reactions and craft biased and less biased sentences.

Help students to understand that phrasing which allows equally for a wide range of responses is unbiased, or at least relatively unbiased, since it is impossible to craft a totally unbiased sentence. For example: "What are your ideas and concerns about the death penalty?" allows for a range of responses. Compare that to questions which are biased to encourage certain responses and discourage others, such as, "In what ways would the death penalty be helpful?" The person responding often feels pushed toward a certain reaction, or can easily guess what answer the questioner prefers to hear.

Various techniques are used to create biased questions and statements: words that are culturally loaded, questions that are put in a certain order to lead the respondent subtly down a particular line of thinking, phrases which lead the respondent to remember a positive or negative experience, and many other tools. Phrases or words that encourage fear are very powerful, such as, "If you knew gangs would be in favor...?" Questions which highlight only one side of a question influence people also, as in, "If you knew that 50% of the town was in favor...?" This question could have been worded highlighting that 50% were opposed! Activity 2 asks students about words, phrases and structures that show bias. By structures we mean the order of words, clauses that scare the respondent, using positive or negative wording, and many other sentence structures.

Eventually when students hold their dialogue at the end of this curriculum, they will need skills to encourage discussion. When they ask the other team questions or present options for solutions it will be important to phrase them in ways that feel fair and open, not leading and attacking.

Activities

1. Have students read Scene 5 of the Centerville Uniform Controversy. Use the bulleted questions below to discuss the scene and explore the role of language in polarizing a controversy. Then write the three survey questions mentioned in the scene (and listed below as a, b, and c) on the chalk board to facilitate the discussion about bias.

- In general, how would you describe the tone of the meeting of the Board of Education? What were the behaviors that show you people were communicating well or communicating poorly?

- What do you think is happening to the relationship between Jerry Davis and Tony Taylor? What do you think is happening to the relationship between Jerry Davis and his father?

- If Tony followed Jerry to his room to continue talking, what sort of discussion do you think they would have?

- What have Jerry and Tony learned about the clothing problem and uniform proposal?

(Write these three questions on the board.)
a. "Should the school board tell you what to wear every morning?"

b. "If the school board can decide on our clothing, next they'll decide on other things about us too, like our hair styles. Is that okay?"

c. "If you knew that most gang violence included fights about clothing, would you be in favor of a uniform?"

- If you were asked question a, how would you answer? (Count the number of students who would answer yes, then count the number who would answer no. Write the numbers on the board.) How would you answer question b? (Count and mark the yes's and no's.) How would you respond to question c? (Count and mark the yes's and no's.)

- Tony Taylor and Jerry Davis accuse each other of using biased and unfair questions on their surveys. If a question is biased, it encourages certain responses and discourages other responses. Do you think the questions were biased? Did you feel pushed to answer a certain way?

- What words and phrases influenced you?

- Can you guess the opinion of the person who is asking the question? (Questions a and b above are from Jerry's survey; question c is from Tony's survey. Explain that being able to detect the questioner's point of view is usually a sign of bias.)

- What are some of the concerns or questions that you have about uniforms that neither Jerry nor Tony deal with at all?

(The example below is optional in case students need more practice or exposure.)

- Let's use another example. Pretend you just went to a concert. Hold an image in your mind of the performance. Now respond to each of the following three questions. (Write the questions and note the responses on the board.)

d. What did you think about the show?

e. Wasn't that a great concert?

f. Can you believe how short that concert was?

- Do you think these questions are biased? What words or phrases influenced you? (Question d probably prompted longer answers, since it is *open-ended*, whereas questions e and f can be answered with a simple "yes" or "no." In questions e and f the opinion of the person asking the question is made clear by the questioner's tone, which could be positive, sarcastic or complaining. Probably, question e encourages agreement that, yes, the concert was great. Probably, question f encourages a complaint that the concert was too short.

- What opinions might you have had about the concert that questions e and f did not allow you to offer? (Encourage students to distinguish between question d, which does allow any response to be given, and questions e and f, which are more specific and biased. Question d is open-ended; questions e and f are *close-ended.* For instance, if someone asked you question e and you felt strongly that the music was too loud, the room was too crowded, but the dancing was great, you might not feel encouraged to state your full opinion.)[*]

2. Give students Handout 5-2. Have them work in small groups to answer the following questions.

- What particular words, phrases, or sentence structures do you feel are used to try to sway you?

- Can you tell from the questions what the questioner believes?

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[*] Adapted from *The Power of Numbers, A Teacher's Guide to Mathematics in a Social Studies Context.* © Gross, Morton, and Poliner. Educators for Social Responsibility, Cambridge, MA, 1993.

- Are there questions or statements, which when taken together or in a certain order, point to a desired response?

3. Debrief this exercise with the whole class by making two lists on the chalk board, as shown below. A few examples of what students might offer are listed.

Words and phrases which influence	*Structures which influence*
gangs	phrase added to promote fear
commands	only offering one choice

Ask each group to offer one item to either list and go around the class till all of the identified influencing words, phrases and structures are on the board.

4. In the small groups again, ask the students to write two additional questions or statements that could have been on each of the surveys on Handout 5-2, one which is heavily and obviously biased, and the other which is more subtly biased. Their new sentences should reflect the same bias that already exists on each survey.

When the groups are done have each group read their sentences aloud to the whole class. Start with any one of the surveys, listen to the heavily biased sentences first, then the more subtle sentences, before moving to another survey. As the class reads the more subtly biased sentences, ask the other students to listen carefully and identify which words or phrases they felt were attempts at influence. The words which the writers intended to cause influence may or may not be the words which the listening students identify. That's all right. One of the lessons about bias is that it is, at least in part, in the ear of the listener. Something which causes fear or raises a concern for one listener may not for another listener.

5. Scene 5 ends when Amy Cochran has tried several times to write a new, more neutral survey with questions which are as unbiased as she can make them. **Have the students, still in their groups, try to write a new survey with at least five questions that Amy could have used.** Note that it is very hard to write a question that all listeners will feel is unbiased, so the students may try to balance the bias across a few questions or statements.

When the groups are done have each group read aloud a few of their questions while their classmates listen for bias.

Connections to Literature, History, Social Studies

1. Ask students to look in a newspaper or magazine for data that was collected from a survey or for articles with quotes about controversial topics. Use the following questions to discuss their findings.

   About data:
   - Does the article you found list the questions that were asked?

   - If so, do you think the questions were reasonably unbiased?

   - If the article doesn't list the questions, try to write two questions that represent different points of view that could have been used.

   About quotes:
   - Does the statement show that the speaker is still open to new ideas?

   - How would you react to such a statement?

   - Try to think of an alternative statement that would sound more open.

2. Have students read the judge's decision in the Rosenberg espionage trial explaining his reasoning for the death sentence. What data does he use to defend his decision?

3. Ask students to analyze the use of language in The Declaration of Independence. In what ways does the language influence the reader in favor of the colonists' position?

60

Opinions, Opinions, Everywhere

The Board of Education held its next meeting in its usual place, the old conference room in City Hall. Without warning, more people of all ages and neighborhoods showed up than at any meeting in recent memory. The janitor had to pull out the stacks of uncomfortable folding chairs, and even they weren't enough to seat everyone. First the Board handled the issue of scheduling renovations for the elementary school playground, and then the issue of the price of school lunch for the next year. The crowd was quiet.

Finally the Board came to the issue of school uniforms. A group of parents - the ones who had met in Fred Davis' house - had submitted their proposal to the Board. The proposal insisted that uniforms be adopted for high school students starting in the next school year, to be followed by the middle school one year later. This was the topic that had attracted the crowd.

As soon as the Board announced this next item on the agenda people sat up straight - you could hear the backs of those old chairs squeaking like chipmunks throughout the room. Hands were shooting up all over as people wanted their chance to speak. Everyone was staring at the Board members, waiting. The chair of the Board, Vivian Brown, had never seen so many faces anxious and eager for a fight, all awaiting her word to get started. She read the proposal out loud. Immediately there were boos and hisses from some people, clapping from others, more hands raised to speak. Think fast, she thought, or this meeting could get unruly.

"The proposal which I just read came from a group of parents. I see a few of them here tonight. Hello to Tony Taylor. Katherine Cochran. And also Fred Davis over there, hi. Is your son Jerry here? Jerry?" Jerry Davis stood across the room from his father, in a cluster of close friends. Vivian Brown continued, "Thank you all for your interest in matters concerning our students. In fact, we on the Board want to thank everyone for coming out tonight to share your thoughts about this issue." Ms. Brown spoke slowly. Her words calmly marched out into the room. Everyone was still looking anxious and eager, but the stares didn't feel quite so harsh at this point. "That is what we'll do tonight - share ideas. I'll do my best to call on various people. Please be brief if you can. Let's start on this side of the room with Kate Cochran."

Twenty speakers and forty-five minutes later, Vivian Brown knew that this issue had touched a nerve in the very heart of Centerville. A lot of people had stated their views calmly; others were barely polite, and in those cases Ms. Brown was quick to pound her gavel and demand better manners. The views she heard covered a wide range: uniforms would save school spirit, uniforms would be the end to all individualism, uniforms would prevent gang identities from developing, uniforms force people of all cultures to wear the clothing of one culture, uniforms would help students focus on academics, and on and on.

Vivian Brown asked for a short recess to confer with the other Board members. The Board members huddled around Vivian's chair.

Moments later she lightly tapped her gavel three times to get everyone's attention. She peered in silence at the crowd. Then she spoke. "Well, we do have a bit of a controversy on our hands here, don't we?" She smiled slightly, hoping to lighten up the mood. The crowd stared back, waiting. "Clearly we're not ready to make a decision on this. The Board needs to know more about this subject. We need some research. We need to know how other people in Centerville feel about this. We're going to put this topic on our next meeting's agenda, which as you know is one month away. And we'll hold it in the high school auditorium - I think we'll need the bigger space, don't you?" Again she smiled, and still the mood was tense. "Okay, here's what the Board wants and needs. We want you to talk about this to your friends and neighbors. And we need more data - you can make surveys for the town, or research the issue at the library. Whatever you find out, send it to us. This Board will not make its decision without some cooling off and some more information. Whatever you think about uniforms, I am sure a decision as big as this one can wait a month. So you all have your homework to do. Thank you for coming tonight and I expect to see each and every one of you next month." One more time she raised her gavel, and ever so slowly lowered it onto the table, barely producing the tiniest tap to end the meeting. She smiled.

Parents and students, teachers and administrators, squeezed quietly through the conference room doors and into the cool night air. Uniforms would be a very big change, for better or worse, depending on your point of view. As they spread out into small groups in the parking lot, many were thinking that they would indeed talk to their neighbors and friends.

Over the next week the proposed uniform rule was creating a lot of arguments - it was also creating a lot of partnerships. People with the same ideas were forming groups and organizations, sending their proposals and counter proposals to the Board of Education. Tony Taylor, one of the parents who first thought of the uniform rule at Fred Davis' dinner party, gave that dinner group a name: "Parents For Kids, Not Clothes." He sent a leaflet to many houses in Centerville explaining his ideas. Almost immediately other parents started a group to fight the uniform rule, and they called themselves, "Parents For Kids, Not Clones." It wasn't long before they too sent a flyer out stating their point of view.

Many students were embarrassed by their parents' strong emotions on the issue and wished the adults would stop their leafleting; other students were proud of their parents for taking a stand on something that was important to them. A large group of students who didn't want to see uniforms at Centerville formed a group; Jerry Davis was a leader of this group. They called themselves "Students For Freedom." They printed some t-shirts with the American flag surrounded by "Students for Freedom" and started selling them around town.

Within days of this development another student group was formed, this time by students who thought the uniform rule was a good idea. They wore large buttons with a picture of a dark-skinned and a light-skinned person, each wearing the same t-shirt that said, "Students For Equity."

The conflict was heating up. The Board of Education said they wanted data. Well then, we'll collect data, thought many of the new group leaders. In the lobby of the Centerville Public Library different groups were handing out surveys and seeking donations. Could it be true that 73% of the town supported a uniform rule, as Tony Taylor boldly declared during an interview with a reporter from *The Centerville Register*? Impossible, claimed a leaflet from "Students for Freedom," who said that 80% of the students did not want to be told how to dress each morning.

One day when Jerry Davis was finished with his afternoon job, he came home to find his father and Tony Taylor at the kitchen table. There were cups of coffee, magic markers, poster paper, donuts, and old survey forms scattered about. The two men were planning how to influence the School Board to vote in favor of a uniform rule.

"Your survey is biased, Mr. Taylor," Jerry declared, while carefully picking a chocolate donut from the box. "Basically it's a lie."

"Oh, listen to the voice of fairness here, Fred," Tony answered sarcastically. "It doesn't take brains to give a survey to a handful of your high school friends asking the kinds of questions you asked. 'Should the school board tell you what to wear every morning?' and 'If they can decide on our clothing, are you ready to have them decide on other things about us too, like our hair styles?' Are you telling me you were looking for the truth, for what would really help this city?"

"Yeah, sure," Jerry shot back. "I am interested in the truth. The truth is that this uniform policy will limit our freedom. I want the Board to hear our reaction to that. What kind of information are you trying to collect by asking 'If you knew that most gang violence included fights about clothing, would you be in favor of a uniform?' You're just scaring people into agreeing with you! Have you completely forgotten what it's like to be a kid? You don't even have kids. Why are you involved in this issue at all?"

"Now, Jerry, mind your manners," Fred interrupted. He and Tony were friends from way back and he did not want his son being disrespectful.

"Oh right, right, you can't disagree with an adult around here without being disrespectful. I forgot. Excuse me, I've got homework to do." Jerry left the kitchen, but not before quickly grabbing another donut from the box. It was a jelly filled. There was a bite taken from it.

"So, Tony, did you really ask the question about gangs in that way?" Fred asked. He leaned across the sticky, cluttered table to grab a copy of the survey. "What else does this thing say, anyway?"

"Sure it mentions gangs. They're part of the issue. It also asks people if they want all our children obsessed with clothing, spending money on clothes instead of saving for college, or if we're going to take a stand on the education of our children. Not in those words exactly, of course...."

The next morning Amy Cochran, President of the Student Government, sat in the tiny student government office tucked under a staircase near the main office of the high school. In her hands she held copies of all the surveys that had been sent around town. Each of the new groups had conducted a poll and each claimed overwhelming support for their stance.

Amy was confused, and all the differing statistics and conclusions from the surveys didn't help her. "I sort of agree a little with everyone," she thought. "I guess I'm stupid or something. I can't make up my mind. Of course I don't want to see gangs in town. Of course I wish that I had to spend less time on clothing each morning. My mother thinks I'm happy with how I look! Yuck! Some days I want to smash my mirror. But I like looking different...sometimes. And I don't think clothing is such a big problem."

She sat quietly for a moment. "I know how these surveys were done. None of them tell the whole story here. I'm so tired of the games people play when they think they're right."

There were many reasons Amy Cochran had been elected president; above all else she was a very determined young woman. She was sure she could write a survey that wasn't so biased, because she herself was interested in the truth, not in convincing people that her point of view was the right one. As the footsteps of her fellow students echoed in the stairwell above her, she wrote a survey. She threw out her first attempt. She edited the second. She threw that one out and wrote a third version. She read it four times. Satisfied that she had done her job - to write a survey with as little bias as possible - she used her reputation to get it published the next day in *The Centerville Register* and *The Centerville High Loudspeaker*, the school newspaper.

Uniforms or Deteriorating Community?

We are parents concerned about the competitive and costly lifestyle of Centerville youth today. Please think of your own budgets and neighborhoods as you answer. This is important!

1. Do you expect the amount of money that you spend on clothes for your children to increase or decrease as your children reach high school where peer pressure about physical appearance is totally out of control?

___ increase ___ decrease

2. If your children work after school would you rather that they spend their hard earned money on clothes or save it for college?

___ spend on clothes ___ save for college

3. If children dressed neatly for school do you think they would have a better work ethic?

___ better work ethic ___ worse work ethic

4. Many of us as children were required to wear uniforms. Do you think you had a greater sense of community when you were young as compared to your children today?

___ closer community when I was young ___ closer now

5. Many cities like Centerville have experienced recent increases in gang activity. If you knew that most gang violence included fights about clothing, would you favor uniforms?

___ yes ___ no

6. Let's take a stand on the education of our children! Are you willing to give uniforms a chance?

___ yes ___ no

Survey by **Parents for Kids Not Clothes**.
Return to Tony Taylor, 17 Oak Street, Centerville.

Clothes Are Just The Surface

Let's implement long-term solutions that address deep problems, without curbing individuality!

1. Do you like to wear the same clothes day after day after day?
___ yes ___ no

2. Do you want the school board deciding how you raise your child?
___ yes ___ no

3. If you knew that certain clothes help your son or daughter to feel confident or happy, wouldn't you want to protect their right to wear them?
___ yes ___ no

4. We believe that each of your children develops in his or her own way, just as each of our children does. Do you agree with this belief?
___ yes ___ no

5. Uniforms are the serious answer to Centerville's problems.
___ agree ___ disagree

6. Are you in favor of a forced clothing mandate?
___ yes ___ no

Please mail to:
Parents for Kids Not Clones, Lynn Samuels, 24 High Street, Centerville.

We can dress ourselves!

Safety is for the mind as well as the body!
If they control our clothes, they control our image!

1. The uniform requirement was proposed by several parents and is currently being considered by the school board without consulting students. Is this fair?

___ no, students should have a say ___ yes, we don't care

2. Do you care about being able to express yourself freely?

___ yes ___ no

3. If the school board can decide on our clothing, next they'll decide on other things about us too, like our hair styles. Is that okay?

___ I decide ___ they decide

4. If everyone in the world were required to wear the same clothes, do you seriously think there would be world peace?

___ no way ___ absolutely

5. Do you think that student fashion is what causes violence in the school?

___ no ___ yes

6. Should the school board tell you what to wear every morning?

___ no ___ yes

Fill this out and leave it in the **Students for Freedom!** box in the main office or give it to Jerry Davis in homeroom 14.

Stop the Clothes War!

Not all of us have the time, money or interest in high fashion.
Let's make life fairer and cheaper!

1. The main goal of school is to develop a sense of fashion.
___ agree ___ disagree

2. The price tags on the coolest clothing is on average $60 per item. Do you think that it is fair to put this kind of monetary and social pressure on students and their parents?
___ yes ___ no

3. Do you wish you had more time in the morning to sleep instead of having to worry about clothes?
___ yes ___ no

4. Last month, a student was swarmed in the hallway by a group of students. When he refused to give them his new jacket, he was beaten up. Do you favor a rule that requires students to wear a uniform to school as a way of preventing violent occurrences?
___ yes ___ no

5. Are you sick of all the cliques and competition that come with clothing these days?
___ yes ___ no

6. Are you in favor of trying out uniforms?
___ yes ___ no

When you're done, leave this in the high school office in the box marked

Students for Equity

or give it to Wendy Miller at first lunch. Pick up a t-shirt too!

Chapter 6

Active Listening

Goal

This chapter contains several activities to develop the skills of active listening.

Vocabulary

active listening

Materials

copies of Handout 6-1 for each student
copies of Handout 6-2 for each group
copies of Handout 6-3 for each student
copies of Handout 6-4 for each group, cut into sets

Time

30 mins. scene reading and discussion questions
15 mins. activity 2
15 mins. activity 3
15 mins. activity 4
30-45 mins. activity 5
15-30 mins. activity 6

Background for Teachers

Active listening is a very conscious form of listening. All forms of listening which foster communication include listening carefully, respectfully and with an open mind. However, an *active listener* does more. It is not a silent role. An active listener is conscious that it is easy to listen carefully and nonetheless misunderstand; that it is easy to listen attentively and yet not convey to the speaker that they have been heard.

An active listener encourages the speaker to keep talking. He withholds all judgments, stories, and interruptions. Instead he uses words and body language to encourage the speaker to continue to describe her point of view on the issue at hand. Active listeners ask short questions and reflect back to the speaker phrases they hear, emotions they sense, and actions they see. Active listening can diffuse the anger that turns potential dialogues into debates. It allows the listener to gather the information needed to more fully understand the experiences and interests of the other person. Further it shows respect to the speaker and offers evidence to the speaker that the listener really has listened. By doing so the goal of a dialogue - to seek greater understanding for building community and solutions - can be reached.

One of the hardest aspects of this skill for many people is realizing that active listening is not a discussion. In a discussion two people expect to share the talking time, air views from both people, communicate as if on a two-way street. Active listening is more like a one-way street. The listener uses the technique to help the speaker explain information and feelings. The listener asks questions and offers comments to help the speaker, not to put forth his own (the listener's) views. Eventually, effective communication between two people trying to solve a problem does need to be two-directional, but at many stages in a controversy active listening can be a crucial skill for fostering more creative thinking, deeper understanding, and trust. Also, by helping the speaker to diffuse strong emotions and share his or her story, the speaker will more likely be able to listen in return.

Activity

1. **Have students read Scene 6 of the Centerville Uniform Controversy.** The following questions can be used after students read it to help them begin to understand the ways that active listening fosters a dialogue.

    - In what ways did Tony discourage Todd from speaking?
    - What were the benefits to Fred and Todd of crossing the lobby to talk?
    - What are the possible reasons Tony said it was a waste of time to listen?
    - What are the possible reasons Fred said, "Not exactly" when asked if he had changed his mind?
    - What did Fred do during his talk with Todd to encourage him to talk?
    - How can it help you to know what other people are thinking and feeling?

2. **Ask students to fill out the T-chart handout, "Comparing Poor Listening and Active Listening" in small groups.** Have the class share and discuss some of their answers.

3. **Distribute, read, and discuss the handout, "Active Listening Guidelines."**

4. The following questions can be addressed to the entire class for a discussion, or done as a microlab (the microlab format was introduced in Chapter 4 on Managing Anger).

- Think of a time when you felt really listened to. What did it feel like? How did the listener respond to you?

- Think of a time when you did active listening. What did it feel like? What were the results?

5. Use the following process for "Practicing Active Listening." Prior to the lesson, copy Handout 6-4 and cut the sheets into sets of practice cards.

a. Divide students into working groups of three. Everyone in the group should have a number from one to three.

b. Distribute "Practicing Active Listening" handouts, one set for each group.

c. Student #1 draws a card and reads it to student #2. Student #2 gives an active listening response. Student #1 says whether the response would have encouraged her/him to talk more. The trio can work on a better response if they wish.

d. Student #2 then draws a card and reads it to student #3, following the same directions as above.

e. The members of each trio continue switching roles and reading the cards until completion.

f. Have a class discussion, covering the following questions.

- What did you notice trying to do active listening?

- What was easy about this activity?

- What was hard about this activity?

- What feelings did you hear being expressed? Did you paraphrase or reflect the feelings?

- How might active listening help in a conflict?

6. Next have students work in active listening triads for additional practice.

a. Divide students into working groups of three. Everyone in the group should have a number from one to three.

b. Explain the task. Student #1 has 2 minutes to talk about something that has been bothering him or her. This can be personal or not, as the student chooses. Student #2 tries to actively listen. Student #3 is the observer. After the two minutes the group evaluates the effectiveness of the active listening.

c. Repeat the exercise until each student has had a chance to be speaker, listener and observer.

Connections to Literature, History, Social Studies

1. Have student write a script showing active listening between such characters as:

- any two jurors in the play or film, *Twelve Angry Men*.

- the driver and passenger in Anton Chekov's short story, "Longing."

2. Have students observe the changes in communication between any of the mother-daughter pairs in *The Joy Luck Club*, by Amy Tan. What happens in the communication of each pair that allows them to be able to communicate more effectively?

3. In the mystery, *A Thief of Time*, by Tony Hillerman, or any of his other mysteries taking place on Navajo lands, ask students to observe the interview style of Lieutenant Leaphorn or of Officer Chee.

Crossing the Lobby

Centerville is similar to many communities - it doesn't have enough money to maintain all its services. For instance, only a few years ago there were two small branches of the town library, as well as the main, big library. Now there is just the one main library, and it isn't open as many hours as it used to be. There once were three copy machines in the lobby of the library. As the machines wore out they could not be replaced. Now there is just one copy machine, although the linoleum floor still shows the dents and stains where the other machines used to be.

Few people remembered that the very first copy machine the town had purchased was with money raised at the mid-winter dance. There was a time when raising funds for the town was a regular part of the dance. Through contests, auctions, and raffles the town had purchased the copy machine, books in Braille, headphones, a coffee machine for the fire department, and two Japanese maple trees for the front lawn of the mayor's home. Those two trees were the last things purchased from a fund-raiser at the dance. It turned out that the mayor had been embezzling money from the town and he ended up in a state penitentiary. The next year people were wary of giving money, wondering who was going to keep track of it, and no one ever brought up fund-raising again.

There was often a line of people waiting to use the copy machine at the library; sometimes this meant that people got frustrated waiting. They might get especially frustrated by waiting in line behind certain people. At this moment, Tony Taylor and Fred Davis stood waiting behind Todd Smith. Todd was holding a book of photographs of rock stars under his left arm. With his right hand he was beginning his search for coins--through the pockets of his ripped jeans, the pockets of his baggy work shirt, the pockets of his big black coat, the flaps and compartments of his dirty old backpack and even the inside of his big red sneakers. He had put a few dimes somewhere.

"Here's a good example of why we need a uniform policy for the kids," Tony announced in a loud voice, far louder than needed to be heard by Fred, who was about two feet to his right. "If he wore the same clothing each day he would have a chance to remember where he put things. Ha ha."

Fred looked up from the *National Geographic* in his hands. He was skimming an article about penguins. Tony held the article that they had found on dress codes used in religious schools. "Oh, hi Todd," Fred said. His son Jerry had been in Little League with Todd.

"So, you know this kid, Fred?" Tony continued in his booming voice. "So, tell me, Todd, what do you find so attractive about being able to dress like that?"

Todd switched his book to his right hand and continued hunting with his left hand through his clothing for his dimes. "It's a matter of freedom. For instance..."

"Oh sure, right," Tony interrupted. "In my day freedom was about not losing your job because of the color of your skin or your accent. And now you think it's about getting to wear worn out jeans."

"No, no. It's different than that. For instance..."

Tony turned to face Fred. "Can you ever remember a time in our lives growing up when we spent so much energy worrying about our clothing? Can you?" He turned back to Todd. "Tell me, do you worry about gangs? Do you think there are kids in this town who take advantage of other kids because of the clothing they wear?"

"Well, sure. But that's only part of it." Todd was beginning to feel embarrassed. Suddenly his eyes lit up. He pulled a shiny new dime from his back pocket. "There's one of them!" His hand went back to its search through his clothing. "But there's more to the clothing issue. Like..."

"Look, let me tell you what I would do if I was you, Todd," Tony began to lecture. "When I was your age..."

Todd's book fell to the floor. He picked it up fast despite the fact that his hands were now practically shaking. "Why don't you let me answer! You just keep interrupting me, and talking about what it was like when you were a kid, and telling me what to do..."

Tony once more addressed Fred. "Listen to him?! Ha!"

Fred stood up straighter and closed his *National Geographic*. "Why don't you listen to him, Tony? What's wrong with listening? Would it be so bad?" Fred would never treat his own boys like Tony had just treated Todd. He wondered if Tony ever really did hear what other people had to say. "Todd, I'll listen to you. Let's go over to that bench there. Tony, I'll be there with Todd when you're done."

Tony watched them walk to the other side of the lobby, Fred in his simple blue shirt and pants, Todd a jumble of old clothing and uncombed hair. Tony couldn't hear much of what they said. Todd seemed to be doing most of the talking. Fred sat quietly, sometimes nodding, facing Todd on the marble bench they shared. For a moment when the copy machine was quiet - these old models were so noisy! - he heard Fred say to Todd, "Tell me more." And Todd went on telling his story. During another quiet moment he heard Fred say, "That must have really bothered you when..." before the machine started up again. A couple of minutes later Fred got up, shook hands with Todd, and ambled back to the copy machine. He looked calm and thoughtful.

"So...what?" Tony asked him impatiently. "He did all the talking? What'd he do? Change your mind?"

"No," Fred said, and stood quietly for a moment. "Not exactly."

"Well, Fred, buddy, you're not going to change anyone's mind by just listening to them. You gotta get better at telling people things if we're gonna win this little fight. You can't waste time listening."

Fred remained quiet and still. "Listening's okay," Fred said quietly. "You can learn a lot by listening..."

"What do you mean you were listening? What could a kid like that teach you?"

"Let me give you an example," Fred said. "Todd was telling me about this shirt he loved to wear to school. It's filled with little holes and patches. Now you would have probably given him a hard time for wearing a shirt like that, right?" Tony nodded. "Well, I asked him to tell me more about that shirt. All I said was, 'Sounds like the shirt was important to you.' And he tells me this whole story about how this was his grandfather's shirt - one of those colorful woven ones from South America - and that whenever he's feeling really lousy about getting up and going to school in the morning he puts it on because his grandfather always told him how important it was to go to school."

Tony put the last sheet into the copy machine. "Yeah, so you heard a story. What's the point?"

It seemed so obvious to Fred. "How are you ever going to get to hear a story like that without listening? How are you going to bring this community together if you don't know what people are thinking and feeling?"

"Mr. Davis!" It was Todd, walking towards them, his hand outstretched. As he got near, Fred grabbed and shook hands with him again and said, "Let's talk some more, Todd. Maybe I can tell you what I've been thinking." Fred glanced at Tony, who just rolled his eyes and sighed in disgust.

Todd caught Tony's eye and quickly looked away. "Sure, Mr. Davis, but you've got my book..."

"Oh, so I do!" Fred smiled as he saw that he had mistakenly picked up Todd's book of rock stars. He placed it in Todd's still outstretched hand. Now where was that magazine with those penguins?

Comparing Poor Listening and Active Listening

How do you know when someone is *not* really listening to you? What do they do or say?	How do you know when someone is really listening to you? What do they do or say?

Active Listening Guidelines

Listening helps you to encourage dialogue. Here are some guidelines for active listening, a technique for helping a person to tell their story by showing actively that you are listening. Just remember **HEARS.**

Help the person to talk by showing that you want to listen and understand.

Examples

- "I would really like to hear your views."
- "Please, go on. Tell me more."
- Use body language to encourage them to speak: good eye contact, attentive posture, non-judgmental facial expressions.

Echo their **E**motions. Describe and ask about the feelings that you sense. This will show that you care about the whole story - the actions *and* the emotions. It will also help them sort out and diffuse strong emotions that may be involved.

Examples

- "It sounds like you were angry during the conversation. Are you still upset?"
- "So you're saying you feel really enthusiastic about this proposal."
- "That must have felt really embarrassing!"

Ask the other person to express his or her thoughts. Use short open-ended questions. Listen to his or her response without interrupting.

Examples

- "What is the problem?" "When did it start?" "Who was involved?"
- "Can you explain more of the background to me?
- "Can you say more about how the peer pressure affected you?"

Restate the important information that the person has expressed to make sure you understand it from his or her point of view, and aren't adding your own assumptions or experiences to it.

Examples

- "So you want to go to the party and your parents won't let you. Is that right?"
- "It sounds like you really believe in the tradition of this dance."

Summarize the key points that were discussed to show you understand the details and the big picture.

Examples

- "It sounds like you have really mixed feelings about uniforms, that they'll make your life simpler in some ways and less comfortable in other ways."
- "From your point of view the heart of the problem is really money more than anything else."

Practicing Active Listening

The clothes I wear express who I am. If I were forced to wear a uniform, I would feel like I lost my freedom. I'm not like everyone else, and I don't want to be.

School seems to have turned into a total fashion show.

You should feel what it's like on the football team. We wear uniforms and it promotes our team spirit. We can focus our attention on winning the game. That's what's important!

You and I have been friends since elementary school. Now you hang around with all these kids who wear the fancy brands of clothing. I can't afford that stuff!

Don't you understand that people could focus on getting an education instead of worrying about getting judged by their sneakers or working overtime to buy the latest fashion?

A uniform rule is a real gas!

It really bugs me the way you guys always talk about clothing.

I'm sick of wearing hand-me downs, Mom. I just want something that's my own. Everyone looks at my clothes and they know right away it belonged to one of my older sisters. It's embarrassing!

Being forced to wear uniforms isn't going to make a bit of difference about the real big problems in this world. Adults are constantly trying to blame us and make us suffer for their messed up world!

I wish I were a boy sometimes. Who cares what they wear?! The pressure is on us to look good - and make them look good, too, while we're at it. It's not fair!

Chapter 7

Positions and Interests

Goal

This chapter introduces students to the language of *positions* and *interests* and helps them begin to separate the two within given conflicts.

Vocabulary

positions
interests

Materials

copies of Handout 7-1 for each student
copies of Handout 7-2 for each group
copies of Handout 7-3 for each student
journals

Time

30 mins. scene reading and discussion questions
30-45 mins. activity 2
45-60 mins. activity 3
15 mins. activity 4
45 mins. activity 5

Background for Teachers

Many conflicts and debates are maintained by people getting stuck in positions. A *position* is a person's initial demand - their proposal to get the problem solved. When people feel under attack, have limited resources at their disposal, or simply want to get their way, they can get stuck defending their position, even if there are better alternatives to solving the conflict.

Interests are the reasons behind the positions, the deeper goals and concerns that the person hopes will be addressed by their position. All too often people don't talk about their interests when they are in a conflict, as if that would be giving too much information to their adversary, or they are simply accustomed to arguing positions. Many people aren't even aware of their own underlying interests as they stubbornly defend a position.

Separating the initial positions from the underlying interests can be an important step in solving a conflict. Initial positions are often incompatible ("Do it this way!" "No, I want to do it that way!"). By focusing on interests - what you hope to get accomplished by doing it "that way" - there are usually many more solutions available than just the positions that were offered at first.

Solving a conflict through discussing and meeting the parties' interests is not a compromise. The parties are not splitting the difference, meeting in a middle ground, where neither of them totally wins nor loses. Quite the contrary. When parties find a solution which meets their interests everyone wins.

Resolving a conflict in a way that meets the parties' interests produces not only an agreed upon solution. The parties have gained a deeper understanding of each other as well as the problem, and the solution will probably last longer. Failure to address deeper interests often leads to the conflict repeating itself again and again.

Activities

1. Have students read Scene 7 of the Centerville Uniform Controversy. The following questions can be used after students read it to help them begin to understand that separating positions from interests maintains a dialogue and can lead to creating mutually agreeable solutions.

- What might Amy mean when she says that Fred Davis is stuck in his position supporting the uniform proposal?
- Finish Amy Cochran's sentence in as many ways as you can: "But this is what your Dad is really interested in: he wants Centerville to be a safe town; he wants his kids to..."
- What might Kate Cochran mean when she says that Amy is stuck in her position as a teenage girl having to spend time and money getting dressed?
- Finish Kate Cochran's sentence about Amy in as many ways as you can: "This is what she's really interested in: she wants Centerville to be a fun place to grow up, and a safe place; she wants..."
- If these three students know the real reasons - the interests - behind the uniform rule, how might that help them deal with their parents?
- If these parents and Ms. Roberts know the real reasons - the interests - behind the kid's opposition to the uniform rule, how might that help them deal with their kids?
- How might people find out the real interests of people with whom they are in conflict?

2. Use the following steps for the "Fighting Over The Orange" activity.

A. Review and clarify the definitions of *positions* and *interests*.

A **position** is a person's initial demand, their proposal to get the problem solved. It often sounds like a solution. A person can easily be focused on and quite stubborn about a single position.

Interests are the underlying reasons for the positions, the deeper goals and concerns that the person needs to address. A person usually has several interests.

B. Read the following story aloud:

Two sisters ran into their kitchen where they found an orange. It was the only orange in the house. One sister said, "I want the orange!" The other sister responded, "No, I want the orange!" This continued until their mother entered the kitchen to end the dispute. She sliced the orange in half, and gave each girl half of the orange. One sister peeled her orange half and threw away the peel. The other sister peeled her orange half and threw away the fruit. So one sister was left holding half of the fruit, the other left holding half of the peel.

C. Use these questions to discuss the story.

- What happened in the kitchen?

- What kept each sister from getting all that she wanted?

- What were their positions as they entered the kitchen?

- What might have been their interests behind those positions? (Think about this and save your ideas for your small groups.)

D. In small groups have the students work on Handout 7-2, "Fighting Over The Orange." Encourage them to be creative; there are *many* possible interests. For example, perhaps an interest for the sister who held the rind was to bake something or maybe her interest was finding something to do because she was bored.

E. The following questions can help in discussing students' answers on the Handout 7-2.

- What were some of the possible interests? (Let each group offer their favorite ideas.)
- How might each sister have gotten all of what she wanted?
- Can the sisters' interests be solved with that one orange?

3. Divide students into five groups. Each group will be responsible for identifying the position and the interests within one perspective of the uniform controversy. Give each group one of the position papers, which appear as editorials in *The Centerville Register*, in Handout 7-3 (with enough copies for all group members).

Give each group a sheet of easel paper and a marker. Ask the students to read the editorial they have, talk about it, and try to identify the position and interests. They should then write these on the easel paper to be shared with the rest of the class later.

When the students are done you may debrief the activity in either of two ways. One way is a jigsaw. Divide the students into new groups in which at least one student is familiar with each perspective. Students can report to each other and ask questions so that all students understand all perspectives. The other way is to facilitate a whole class debriefing with each group reporting out and responding to questions. Either way, all students should receive copies of all editorials for reference and future use.

Background for teachers on this activity
Below are listed the position and main interests of each group as they appear in the editorials. Each group has other interests as well - in the position papers or that have been mentioned in earlier activities. If students identify those and want to add them to their lists, that should be encouraged.

Parents for Kids, Not Clothes' position is: Uniforms should be instituted.
Some of their main interests are: students should spend less money on clothes, the focus of education should be on learning and improving the community, popularity shouldn't be based on clothing.

Parents for Kids, Not Clones' position is: Uniforms should not be instituted.
Some of their main interests are: clothing should be a way for expressing oneself, differences should be appreciated (especially

in public schools), promoting conformity is wrong and may cause students to be treated unfairly.

Students for Freedom's position is: Uniforms should not be instituted.
Some of their main interests are: students should make their own decisions, students should be involved in the town's decision, being different is good and should be appreciated, the real issue of competition is important and needs a deeper response than uniforms.

Students for Equity's position is: Uniforms should be instituted.
Some of their main interests are: there's too much competition over clothes, clothing costs too much money, they want to be treated well even if they don't have fancy clothes, they want to do their best.

David Chang's position is: Don't compromise on an optional uniform policy.
Some of his main interests are: not highlighting economic differences; avoiding another way students get negatively labeled; preventing adult interference in choosing options; guarding against the dominance of one culture's norms.

4. Journal questions

Ask students to think of recent conflicts in their own lives that they will write about. Ask them to try to identify what the position was of each person in the conflict, and what the deeper interests might have been. Use the following questions to bring the whole class together again. Write the following questions on the board for them to consider as they write.

- When and how is it easy to know deeper interests?
- When and how is it hard to know deeper interests?
- Were there situations when it would work to simply ask, "What do you really want?" Why doesn't that always work?
- What were your position and interests? How did you speak about your interests?
- Do you have new insights into the conflicts you were discussing or new ideas about solutions?

5. In small groups have students work on Handout 7-4, "Separating Positions and Interests." After discussing their various answers, the following questions can help in leading a discussion. Student answers can be quite varied in this activity.

- When and how is it easy to know deeper interests?
- When and how is it hard to know deeper interests?
- Were there situations when it would work to simply ask, "What do you really want?" Why doesn't that always work?
- When did you need more information to understand interests? How could you get that information?

Connections to Literature, History, Social Studies

1. Have students articulate the positions and the interests of any of the following historical individuals and groups or others that students may be studying:
- Rosa Parks when she sits on the bus
- Henry David Thoreau when he retreats to Walden Pond
- Jimmy Carter, Menachem Begin, and Anwar Sadat at the Camp David Peace Conference (chapter 1, *Talking Peace*, by Jimmy Carter)
- Margaret Sanger when she publicly promotes birth control in the early 1900's
- Abraham Lincoln when he signs the Emancipation Proclamation
- Harry Truman when he orders the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima
- the colonists who choose to fight the British in the Revolutionary War, and the colonists who choose not to fight
- the union and the management's positions and interests in any major strike in labor history
- the various interests held by different people in the Women's Suffrage Movement
- the North and the South during the Civil War.

2. Ask students to identify the positions and interests of the fictional characters below or others from books they may be reading:
- the Joad family in choosing to head west in *The Grapes of Wrath,* by John Steinbeck
- Celie choosing to stay with Mister for as long as she does in *The Color Purple,* by Alice Walker
- Brutus choosing to kill Julius Caesar in *Julius Caesar*, by William Shakespeare
- the various characters about deciding what to do with the insurance money in *Raisin in the Sun*, by Lorraine Hansberry.

It's Just the Position He's Stuck In

Todd Smith was meandering around the Oak Park neighborhood, lost in his thoughts, not paying attention to time, and nonetheless headed for Jerry Davis' home. It was a warm winter afternoon, just a week before the Board of Education was to meet on the uniform proposal. Somewhere in Todd's backpack was the latest edition of *The Centerville Register*. The newspaper included the statements that all the different groups had written to the Board of Education, hoping that their side would be the most convincing. The sun was low in the sky, and Todd's shadow looked to him like Darth Vader, stretching out before him.

There was a time, years ago, when he rode his bike to Jerry's house almost every day. But a lot had changed, and many of the old houses, trees, and stores looked different. Some were new. And he and Jerry had changed as well. They said hello to each other when they passed in the hallways of school. It was a friendly sort of hello, and that was about it. As Todd was wandering the streets, remembering the time long ago when he and Jerry had discovered at least a million centipedes under a rock, he suddenly realized that he was standing in front of the Davis house. "Okay!"

He pulled open the rickety screen door and rang the bell. A moment later Jerry opened it. "Hey, Todd," Jerry said. There was silence. Jerry waited and Todd just stood there, looking kind of goofy. "You want something, Todd? Do you want to come in? Come on," Jerry continued, pulling open the door.

"Sure," Todd said in an uncertain voice. The house looked a lot like he remembered it. There was the broom closet, the same old sofa, the same kitchen table. Amy Cochran was sitting at the table. "Hi Todd." She was the friendliest kid he had ever met.

"Hi, Amy," Todd answered. "Say, Jerry, I've got your father's magazine." From his big black coat pocket he pulled the National Geographic issue with the article about penguins. "It was in my library book." Jerry took it and chuckled.

Amy looked at Jerry, her eyebrows raised, letting him know that an explanation was needed. Jerry's dad had told him about the meeting in the library and Jerry quickly told the story to Amy. Todd sat down at the table, and began pushing a small pile of spilled sugar into different shapes with his index finger.

"You know, your Dad's okay," Todd said, not looking up.

"Yeah, that's what everyone says," Jerry replied without enthusiasm.

"Yeah, he really is okay," Todd repeated, practically insisting on it.

"Jerry isn't thinking so these days," Amy said to Todd. "The uniform proposal is not exactly bringing these boys together. But it's like I was telling Jerry, his Dad isn't mean or critical or always putting his foot down and giving orders. He's a nice guy! He's nicer than most dads! Really, Jerry, he is." She glanced at Jerry who silently nodded in agreement. "So, we have to figure out what the real reasons are he's all excited about a uniform rule. If we can't figure out why someone as cool as Mr. Davis wants uniforms we are never going to get the rest of the parents to give it up."

Todd looked up from the little labyrinth he had constructed from the spilled sugar. He stared at Amy blankly. Real reasons? What does that mean?

Amy helped Todd out without being asked to do so. "See, the uniform proposal is just a bad idea. Like you said, Mr. Davis is an okay guy. He's not a bad guy, or an old-fashioned guy. He just got stuck on a bad idea. But there have to be understandable reasons behind the idea. Of course, you wouldn't know it reading these completely biased statements in *The Register*." There on the table was another edition of *The Centerville Register*, just like the one Todd had stuffed into his backpack. Amy opened the paper to the editorials, and pushed it across the table towards Todd. "Have you seen these, Todd?"

"Like, what do you mean my father has 'understandable reasons'?" Jerry interrupted, his voice rising and falling as he worked to keep his frustration in check. "To control kids? To never allow change and progress in the world? To keep things the way they were when he was a kid so that he understands it? And are you saying my statement is completely biased?"

"Are you done?" Amy asked sharply, her voice now frustrated. She did not like to be interrupted. She and Jerry were close friends. They were stubbornly honest with each other. Their emotional energy had caught Todd's attention - he was glad he had stopped by. Jerry apologized for his interruption.

"So," Amy continued, comfortably settling into her chair with her audience of two now paying attention. "He says he wants a uniform rule. It's just the position he's stuck in. But this is what your Dad is really interested in: he wants Centerville to be a safe town; he wants his kids to..."

A few blocks from the Davis home, in Raymond Johnson's big living room, there was another meeting happening. Fred Davis was there, feeling slightly uneasy in one of Raymond's very expensive red leather chairs - the chairs had matching footrests and Fred couldn't bring himself to put up his scuffed old shoes, even though a footrest was right there in front of him. Tony Taylor sat next to Raymond on the extra-long couch. Kate Cochran and Elizabeth Roberts, the science teacher, sat across from them on the small sofa.

Raymond had invited them to his house so they could be well prepared for the Board of Education meeting. On Raymond's coffee table was a copy of *The Centerville Register*, spread open so all could look at the editorials. But something else was on Raymond's mind. He leaned forward, his large frame and deep voice commanding attention. "I am not pleased with what has happened in this town since we first wrote our proposal," he said slowly. He glanced at each person. "We've driven a wedge in the community and between ourselves and our children."

Tony quickly responded. "Raymond, they're just kids. They're always rebelling for the hell of it. It's not the time to back down just because they're complaining."

Fred sighed. Tony was getting on his nerves. He wanted Raymond and the others to know that he didn't agree with Tony, even though they were old friends and came to this meeting together. "You know, Raymond, I agree. The wedge is right in my kitchen between Jerry and me. Where else are you hearing about it?" Fred asked, leaning forward now, as if his body and Raymond's were being magnetically pulled towards the center of the room.

"I'm hearing a lot of stories," Raymond quietly began. "Kids at the high school almost getting into fights about the proposals. My niece Cheryl, at the middle school, threatens some boy on the bus because he says something or other about this situation, and the bus driver has to pull over to break them up..."

Elizabeth Roberts leaned forward. "Fred, I actually got into an argument with your wonderful boy Jerry about this uniform business. I don't know what got us started." She closed her eyes and shook her head as that memory drifted through her thoughts.

"People, people," Tony practically wailed. "It's what kids do! It's happened throughout history: parents make the rules and their kids rebel just because there's a rule. It's what we did! They don't need a reason to rebel - they don't even have reasons! "

Kate Cochran leaned forward. "They do have reasons, Tony. It's just..."

Tony flopped back into the couch and groaned. Fred snapped at him. "Tony, you have to listen to people! Didn't you hear what Raymond said? We wanted this proposal to pull the town together and it's doing just the opposite. Even you don't want that. Just listen for once, okay?!" He faced Kate Cochran. They all did.

"So," Kate continued, organizing her thoughts once again. She did not like to be interrupted. She settled back into the couch, straightened her blouse, her small audience patiently paying attention. "Consider these kids. Spending so much time and money getting dressed up each day. I don't think most would be in favor of a uniform rule, maybe they would be. They certainly would have more time for themselves in the mornings if they had a uniform to put on. It's just the position they're stuck in as a teenagers - getting dressed in their own certain way seems really important. But now consider what else they're really interested in: they want Centerville to be a fun place to grow up, and a safe place; they want..."

Fighting Over The Orange

Sister who held the fruit Her position: "I want the orange!"	**Sister who held the rind** Her position: "I want the orange!"
Possible interests behind demanding the orange	Possible interests behind demanding the orange

The Centerville Register • Sunday Edition

Uniforms Show Pride and Purpose

Our children are inundated by advertising and music videos that say, "How you look is more important than what you do." You can't turn around without seeing a billboard for jeans, a sign on a bus for jeans, a TV commercial for jeans. It's no wonder that popularity in town is more and more about the style of your jeans than what you do to make Centerville a better place to live.

On top of that, the fashions change from year to year. We remember when everyone wore bell-bottom jeans. Then it was tight and straight-legged pants. After that pants were really baggy. And with each fashion change our children feel forced to buy new clothing, or risk being teased by their peers. If you don't wear the right clothing you are left out of groups, or not invited to parties. Adolescence is hard enough without worrying that your clothing will determine who talks to you and what others think of you.

Further, the t-shirts that young people wear these days seem to get more vulgar by the day. How can offensive language and pictures do anything but distract attention from learning and cause some students to feel uncomfortable? Surely, this isn't what the First Amendment to our Constitution - freedom of speech - was meant for!

Clothing seems to get more expensive all the time as well. Instead of worrying about the newest fashions students could focus on saving the money toward college or other more important investments.

We believe that uniforms will help students focus on the higher purposes of education, instead of becoming shoppers. Uniforms will also instill a sense of community pride in the young people and in the larger community. Don't we all feel like kids today have gotten out of control? Wouldn't we all feel safer if the teenagers on the corner were in button-down shirts and blazers, looking ready to learn?

We want to see the Centerville Schools take a stand on this issue. We want the schools to put a stop to this competition for dressing. We want our children to worry about their grades and what college they will go to, not how low their hem lines are or how their hats sits on their heads. We want the focus of school to be on education, not fashion.

A uniform rule would accomplish these goals.

Submitted by,

Tony Taylor, Fred Davis, Katherine and David Cochran, Raymond and Beverly Johnson, of Parents For Kids, Not Clothes

The Centerville Register • Sunday Edition

Community or Conformity?

One of the most important tasks of growing up is finding out who you are. It is a time to take risks, to ask questions, to explore the world. It is a time to do things a bit differently than your parents, and a bit differently than the kid next door.

One of the simplest and least harmful ways children express themselves is through their clothing. As children we all knew the importance of a favorite sweater or hat or sneaker. Let's face it - even adults have favorite outfits. Dressing yourself isn't about competition. It is about simply being a person who has likes and dislikes.

Throughout history clothing has served as much as an art form as a way to keep warm and dry. The variety of textures and patterns and colors that human beings have developed for clothing are as much a part of our civilization as our books and music and architecture. Isn't acceptance of different styles of clothing, and learning how to appreciate the differences rather than compete over them, part of what we want to teach our children?

We have chosen to send our children to public schools. If we had wanted them to know only one form of expression, we would have chosen military academies or parochial schools. This is public education, in a country with a diverse public. The schools say that they promote appreciation of diversity. Do they mean it? Whose clothing gets to be picked as the uniform?

As a community we need to show that we support public education and all of the different children who are enrolled. Why is it that people don't seem to care about public schools any more, or is it just easy to blame schools, as if they created our community's problems? Will kids in uniforms really change the public's beliefs about children and schools? Let's hope we're not that shallow!

We believe that making uniforms mandatory would be illegal. Wearing a sarong, or a dashiki, or a colorful bandana is not a danger to society. It is not breaking the law to dress in the clothing your family buys for you. But it may be illegal for the town government to tell people what they have to wear. We don't need to waste thousands of dollars in court costs when we get sued for a uniform policy.

We believe the best communities are not dictatorships. We believe the best communities support everyone in being themselves. We believe that families should decide how to dress their own children, not politicians on the school board.

A uniform rule will not help Centerville be a better community.

Lynn Samuels and the members of Parents for Kids, Not Clones

The Centerville Register • Sunday Edition

Be Serious, Clothes Aren't the Real Issue

The point of going to school is to learn, and we learn so that we can be responsible adults. We learn how to make decisions and figure out who we are. We learn that is it wrong to copy, and that it is better to express our own ideas than just go along with the crowd. We also learn that being different from each other is important. For these reasons a uniform rule is a bad idea.

Many high school students are getting ready to vote in elections for the mayor, the governor and even the President of the United States, but we are not supposed to know how to dress ourselves! The adults proposing this rule think they know what it is like to be a teenager, but they don't. Not only is the uniform rule a bad idea, but it is being proposed without asking the most important people involved - the students! It is hypocritical to tell us we live in a democracy and then treat us this way.

We also worry about what's next. Today adults want to tell us how to dress. If this rule passes, next they'll make rules about how to cut our hair, what books to read, what music is okay. Some of the worst dictators in history could have been stopped if people didn't let them get away with their first bad rule.

Besides, we aren't the same as each other - and that's a good thing. What looks good on one person doesn't always look good on another. Likewise, what feels good on one person can feel awful on someone else. Requiring uniforms will make some students feel uncomfortable and self-conscious everyday! And it will make all of us fit into some mold just when we're trying to sort out what we like and who we want to be. Forced into the same mold - that's a bad idea.

The adults say they want us to be less competitive. Maybe they should change how they score us, grade us, and rank us. That sort of competition is worse than anything else we face every day. Competing for grades puts every single one of us in competition with each other.

Finally, it is absurd to think that a uniform rule will make this a better world. The adults are responsible for all the poverty, racism, and injustice in the world - making us wear uniforms is not going to fix the problems they created before we were even born. We are not going to wear uniforms just so the adults can think they are being responsible about problems in the world. Maybe the City Councilors or State Representatives should wear uniforms and we'll see if they can suddenly cooperate to solve real issues. Let our parents wear uniforms first and see if they all get along better!

Until then we believe a uniform rule is a bad idea.

Jerry Davis, writing for
Students for Freedom

The Centerville Register • Sunday Edition

Stop the Clothes War or We Lose!

We go to school to learn, but so many things get in the way. Many of us have evening and weekend jobs--not all of us have parents who will pay for our college tuitions - and we squeeze in homework late at night and early in the morning. We go to bed late; we get up early; we want to do well in life. For many of us it would be a relief to not worry about fashions each morning. It would be great to just throw on a uniform and concentrate on the important things we have to do.

In school it is often hard to concentrate on learning. There are so many social pressures. The school is filled with cliques, with people talking behind each others' backs. We divide ourselves by courses, by neighborhoods, by who's a good athlete, by who has money - it goes on and on. Sometimes these differences lead to violence. It could get worse. It would be great to just throw on a uniform and eliminate one of those differences - one that is totally based on how much money you have to spend on clothing.

Even in classes clothing makes a difference. Whether they admit it or not, teachers get impressions of you by how you look. Maybe they don't say their thoughts out loud about ripped jeans and torn leather jackets and old workshirts. But we know who gets called on in class and who gets overlooked. We know who is assumed to be causing trouble. There are kids who even have to steal clothing because they want to fit in. It would be great to throw on a uniform each morning knowing that our teachers would focus on our ideas, not on our appearances.

And it isn't just the teachers who notice, either. The idea that clothing defines who you are affects us when we apply for after school jobs and even when we go into stores to buy stuff. If you don't look good in this town you're treated as if you are no good. It would be great to just throw on a uniform and feel like we measure up.

School can be a place where we do our best. To become such a place we have to start eliminating the barriers to success. When we spend time in the morning worrying about our outfits we will not do our best. When we divide ourselves according to fashions we will not do our best. When adults judge us by the value of our clothing rather then the value of our ideas we will not do our best.

A uniform policy is a good idea.

Thanks for listening.

Respectfully submitted by,
Wendy Miller from
Students for Equity

The Centerville Register • Sunday Edition

Optional Uniforms Are Not An Option

Many of you remember me. I taught English at the high school until two years ago. Now I teach in a school that has an "optional" uniform policy. On any given day about 80% of the students wear the uniform. Many of my former Centerville students have written to me about your controversy, and have asked my opinion. Some of them think I will support a uniform policy from my current point of view. Others think I will oppose a policy from my current point of view. Instead, I write to advise you, from my current point of view, to either enforce a uniform policy for everyone, or reject a uniform policy, but *don't make it optional.* This is what I have seen:

1) Optional uniforms can make our economic differences more obvious. Uniforms are a blessing to poorer families - they are cheaper than the latest styles, easier to hand down from child to child. I sometimes think we should sew across the back of the uniforms: "This is All I Can Afford." In our society people with money do not work at jobs that require uniforms, and I don't believe they bring up their children to be like everyone else. The uniform option makes wealth obvious.

2) In the eyes of certain teachers and administrators, students who choose not to wear the uniform are seen as rebels, or trouble-makers. They are spoken of as "those kids" in the same tone people used to use about foreigners, or Blacks. Teachers don't like students who make waves. Options aren't useful if it gets you a bad name in the school for choosing one of the options.

3) Certain teachers and administrators give prizes, such as pizza parties, to a class if all the students wear the uniform for a week. This is the sort of peer pressure we want to decrease in schools. The teachers who give these parties say all they want is to get the students to try the uniforms as part of our school effort to all get along. I don't see how we can call the uniform an option when the adults use clever techniques to pressure the students to do things only one way.

4) The uniforms (white shirts and blue ties for boys; white shirts and blue skirts for girls) represent one culture's uniforms. Is white the color of a uniform? Are ties for boys? Can girls wear pants? To be blunt, the uniform lets only certain students dress like their parents do, or like they do when they go to pray. When a student takes the option of wearing clothing from another culture, are they helping this school community? If so, why have a uniform policy?

I hope these ideas help you reach a decision in Centerville. I miss the town very much. Best wishes to all.

Yours truly,

David Chang

Separating Positions and Interests

- Read each story - your goal is to write interests for each person in each story. Sometimes you are given the positions of each person and sometimes you have to write those too.
- If you are guessing at the interests, list the interest with a question mark. Remember that there are many possible interests; write three that seem likely.

Story One: Sasha has to finish her homework. She sits on the comfortable couch in the living room, puts on background music, and gets to work. Her mom comes home from a long day at work and is looking forward to sitting on the same couch and listening to the news on the radio. The following interaction takes place:

> Mom: Sasha, please go sit somewhere else - I want to lie on the couch right now.
> Sasha: I got here first - it's not fair that I have to move.
> Mom: Life isn't fair - now please move.
> Sasha: No, I am not going anywhere.

Sasha's Position: I want to lie on the couch.	Her Mother's Position: I want to lie on the couch.
Sasha's Interests	Her Mother's Interests

Story Two: Students who are working on a group project are trying to divide the tasks. Karen likes to do artwork and insists on creating the cover of the project by herself. The other students in the group want to have input.

Karen's Position: I want to make the cover alone.	Rest of Group's Position: We want to have input into the cover.
Karen's Interests	Rest of Group's Interests

Story Three: Steven walks into Mr. Hollander's class wearing his new favorite t-shirt with a big slogan on it. Mr. Hollander orders Steven to change his shirt immediately. Steven refuses

Steven's Position: ________________	Mr. Hollander's Position: ____________
Steven's Interests	Mr. Hollander's Interests

Story Four: The neighborhood of South Boston, Mass. has a large Irish-American population. For many years a veterans organization has sponsored a popular St. Patrick's Day parade through the neighborhood. Many different Irish-American groups march. One year a group of gay Irish-Americans joined the march. Some parade watchers threw rocks and bottles at the gay marchers; most did not. After the event there was a lot of publicity about the effect of the gay marchers on the parade. The veterans organization denied the group a place in the march the next year.

Gay Marchers' Position: ____________	Veteran's Organization's Position: ___
Gay Marchers' Interests	Veteran's Organization's Interests

Story Five: The Student Council at Seagrove High School voted to conduct a student survey to rate teachers. The results would be made available to all students. The administration refuses to allow the Student Council to conduct such a survey.

Students' Position: ______________	Administration's Position: __________
Students' Interests	Administration's Interests

Story Six: You are baby-sitting a 6 year old boy named Max. It is already 10 o'clock - one hour past his bedtime - and he still refuses to go to sleep. You want to watch television without being interrupted. You tell Max it is time to get tucked in and go to sleep. Max says he does not feel sleepy. He thinks it's fun to stay up late watching TV with the baby-sitter. He also wants to say goodnight to his parents before he goes to sleep. His parents will probably be home within the next hour, and you do not want them to think you are incapable of getting Max to go to bed.

Your Position: ________________	Max's Position: ________________
Your Interests	Max's Interests

Story Seven: NASA has announced a program to send satellites, and then people, to Mars. A group of scientists and politicians protest the program.

NASA's Position: ________________	Protester's Position: ______________
NASA's Interests	Protester's Interests

Story Eight: Kevin is the #1 basketball player at his high school. He is a senior and is counting on getting a basketball scholarship for college. In his last game he sprained his ankle. Kevin's coach noticed the injury and is not going to let him play in the state tournament this week. Kevin is upset about this because a recruiter from an important college will be attending the game, and Kevin wants to show the recruiter what he can do. Kevin's coach wants to win this tournament and does not want to take a chance with an injured player.

Kevin's Position: ________________	Coach's Position: ________________
Kevin's Interests	Coach's Interests

Chapter 8

Methodological Belief

Goal

Students will be exposed to a different way of thinking and communicating in a conflict. They will begin to ask believing questions and learn to be open to others' perspectives.

Vocabulary

methodological belief
methodological doubt

Materials

copies of Handout 8-1 and 8-2 for each student

Time

30 mins. scene reading and discussion questions
40-60 mins. activity 2 & 3
30 mins. activity 4

Background for Teachers

The ideas of methodological belief[*] are new to most people, and often very difficult to understand and put into practice. We encourage teachers to thoroughly familiarize themselves with the ideas and the practice examples below, and to share this background information with students.

At the heart of many arguments and debates is a conviction that we are right and the other person is wrong. In the name of searching for truth or the best idea, we ask questions that attack the other person's statements, searching for inconsistencies and poorly supported perspectives. We listen for points of disagreement, even if they are minor, to show weaknesses in a viewpoint. We shut out the possibility that the other person may have an important piece of the truth; we resist the legitimacy of ideas that contradict our own. In the heat of a debate, we avoid the possibility that we may learn, grow, and change from the ideas of the other person. To do so might look weak. To adjust our beliefs might be seen as losing.

Western civilization has a long tradition of using *methodological doubt* to measure ideas against each other. We are taught to look for weaknesses in other people's arguments, and attack those weaknesses. The doubting approach is often taught in schools as the analysis and critique component of critical thinking. In contrast, an underlying tenet of methodological belief is that in a search for truth and understanding it is important to find points of agreement and common ground, to be open to the credibility of another view, as well as to doubt. In the exchange of ideas that includes doubt and belief new ideas would be ever-emerging as the old ones are combined.

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[*] We have drawn on the work of Peter Elbow. For more on methodological belief, see *Embracing Contraries*, by Peter Elbow, Oxford University Press, New York, NY, 1986.

Methodological belief isn't just trying to understand what another person is saying. It includes trying to understand what they are saying *from their point of view*, what has led them to their ideas. Also, when one *believes* in this way, it is important to consciously suspend one's own doubts, to the extent possible, in order to be as open as possible to the other idea and viewpoint. In the process one's own assumptions are often exposed and can be newly considered. More than just seeing something from another person's viewpoint, believing is a way of searching for commonality and pieces of the truth in another person's ideas and viewpoint, and letting those new understandings push the listener to reconsider his or her own ideas. Students will need to use all of the skills they have already developed in this curriculum: avoiding escalating language, managing their anger, using "I statements," reducing bias in their language, listening actively, and separating positions from interests.

Methodological belief is a component of holding a dialogue, a method that asks us to withhold our arguments until we have fully explored our potential to believe the other person. Participants work together to show each other how one can believe a point of view. They ask each other questions that seek understanding. They risk changing. They also gain clarity on their own beliefs by answering questions, and so have an opportunity to articulate how they have come to know and believe what they do.

Here is an example of asking believing questions. When hearing the statement, "It's better for people to have logging jobs than worry about some rare species living in the forest," believing questions or statements might be, "I too believe that jobs are important," "How do you go about deciding which is more important?," or "At what point would you be concerned about the sustainability of the forests?" Other questions would be internal, ones the listener would ask himself or herself to remain open, such as, "What would it feel like if I agreed with you?" The answers to these questions will often prompt further questions that help the listener better understand the way the speaker comes to have a strong position on this controversial issue.

For teachers who want to practice before introducing this concept to students, read the steps in Activity 2 below and then create believing statements and questions for the following examples:

"A loaded gun in the house keeps you safe."
"Curfews would be good for everyone!"
"We should make the Constitution a lot easier to amend."

Activities

1. Have students read Scene 8 of the Centerville Uniform Controversy. The following questions can be used after students read the scene to help them begin to understand methodological belief.

- What was it about Jerry's gas mileage question that was so memorable for his dad?
- Jerry says parents don't usually take the time to understand what kids believe. What do people have to do to understand what other people believe? What makes it hard for people to do this?
- Jerry said he wasn't going to admit that he rethought his position about which car to buy. What sorts of things prevent people from admitting that they have new thoughts about their positions?
- Fred suggests that he and Jerry find out something that they agree on first, before they start to ask questions and disagree. What might be effective about this method of discussion? What might be ineffective?
- Fred is concerned that Jerry not feel attacked by his question. Why might he care about this? What happens in a discussion when people feel attacked? How can asking believing questions avoid feeling attacked?
- Jerry says that talking this way feels weird. What's weird about it?

2. Have students participate in the following process to experience methodological belief.

a. Ask the students to divide themselves into two groups, one to represent the belief, "Uniforms are a good idea for schools" and the other group believing, "Uniforms are a bad idea for schools." If the students are predominantly of one mind on the issue, ask for volunteers who are willing to temporarily and seriously represent the unpopular position. The two groups should sit on opposite sides of the room. Tell the students that the goal of this exercise is to practice believing what other people believe, to really see their perspective, even if it's only for a little while.

b. Explain to the students that they will be listening to a certain position on the uniform issue. Explain that this is an exercise in understanding and being open to the other view. They are to listen with as open a mind as possible, continually trying to believe rather than dispute the position. Even their body language should show that they are trying to be open, trying to believe, not doubt. You may want to model some of the types of body language that show disbelief and opposition, and then others that show openness.

c. Focus on understanding one group first. Ask one person from that group to say why he or she chose to sit on that side of the issue. The students on the other side of the room are to listen for something that each of them is also able to believe. They can focus on specific points that the speaker mentioned or on more general points or feelings that might have been implied. They can try this by finishing the sentence: **"Like you, I also believe that...."**

d. Ask if there is a student who is not able to share any aspect of that belief. **It is important for everyone to try** before moving to the next step. If everyone is able to believe something about the statement, try another one.

e. Once everyone has found something to affirm in the other belief, they will probably still have aspects that they find hard to believe or understand. **So, next, offer students the opportunity to ask questions to gain a deeper understanding** of the other students' belief. Students should construct questions that show that they are trying to understand and not doubt. Their body language should still be reflecting this. Encourage students to think about their questions before asking them out loud, to choose their words carefully. The basic guideline is: **Ask questions that call for a response, not a defense.**

Before the other student answers, ask if the question felt like an attempt to understand, rather than argue. Was the question phrased in a way that made him or her feel defensive? Did it feel accusatory in tone? If so, ask the questioner to try to rephrase the question to cause no defensiveness.

When the answer is given, ask the questioner if the answer satisfied his or her need. Is there something in the answer that is not understood or believed? If so, allow for follow-up questions, which are often essential for gaining an understanding of another person's beliefs. Save the "But, I disagree..." questions for the next step and the debriefing.

f. Students may then state points they still don't understand or on which they disagree. Even as they state their points of disagreement they should state them in a way that does not condemn the other view or insult the other person. It is important to encourage students to state any points of disagreement that they have for several reasons. The goal of methodological belief is not to take on the belief of any and every person with whom you might disagree, changing your mind with each person you meet. It is to take on the openness of believing new ideas, letting those ideas affect your own thoughts. Stating points of disagreement is another step in the process of managing ideas in conflict with each other.

g. Follow steps *c* through *f* a second time for the other viewpoint.

h. Debrief the process. Use the following questions to help students describe their experiences trying to believe and to help them put closure on the exercise. It can be very disconcerting to find out that they can believe a position they had previously thought of as unfounded, immoral or diametrically opposed to beliefs that they held.

- Were you able to believe the speaker, at least temporarily? How did believing make you feel?

- What values does the speaker's position represent? What is the speaker assuming about the world?

- What seem to be the facts this person is using to support her or his position? What are the sources of the facts? How do you feel about those sources?

- From what frame of reference does this person seem to be operating? Consider ideology, strategy, morality, politics, economics, social justice, technology, etc.

- Are there kinds of information that you accept from someone with whom you agree, and doubt from someone with whom you disagree?

- How do the assumptions and values of the speaker match and differ from your own?

- What made it easy or difficult to believe the speaker?

- What are your thoughts about your own perspectives and ability to communicate?

3. Explain to students that they just went through a process called methodological belief. It combines what they learned in earlier chapters about speaking from their own perspectives, asking open-ended questions that encourage the other person to share their thoughts and feelings, and looking for underlying interests. Feel free to share more background on believing from the teacher's explanation at the beginning of the chapter.

4. Give students handout 8-2, "A Letter To My Granddaughter." This is from Amy Cochran's grandmother, Lillian Cochran.

a. Explain to the students that they will be reading a certain position on the uniform issue. Explain that this is another exercise in understanding, not doubting. They are to read the letter with as open a mind as possible, continually trying to believe rather than dispute the position.

b. Have the students read handout 8-2, "A Letter To My Granddaughter."

c. After everyone reads the letter, ask students to write down what they, too, are able to believe from Grandma Lillian's perspective. They can focus on specific points that she mentioned, on more general points, or on feelings that might have been implied. They can try this by finishing the sentence: "I also believe that...." or "Like Grandma Lillian, I think or feel...."

d. Ask one student to share a believing statement. Ask if there is a student who does not share that belief. If everyone also believes that statement, try another one. From this point follow the same directions in as in Exercise #2e above, allowing questions, statements of disagreements, and debriefing.

5. Further practice using believing. Have the class reread the editorials in Handout 7-3 and practice believing with each of the different perspectives.

Connections to Literature, History, Social Studies

1. While reading the following books ask students to believe statements that may deepen their insight into certain characters or their understanding of the novel or play as a whole.

- "Holden Caulfield is a sensitive young man," while reading *The Catcher in the Rye*, by J. D. Salinger.
- "McMurphy is crazy," while reading *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, by Ken Kesey.
- "It was right and just to bury her brother" from Antigone's perspective in *Antigone* by William Shakespeare, and "It was a treason to bury her brother," from Creon's perspective.
- "Winston was wrong to fight Big Brother," in *1984*, by George Orwell.

2. Examine the role of believing in *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller.

3. Use any of the historical events listed in Connections to History in Chapter 7 and create believing statements for students to try. You may use any other historical event or era that your class has discussed as well. It can really expand students' thinking if they work on believing a few perspectives. Here are examples:

- Westward expansion was a mistake.
- Westward expansion was inevitable.
- Westward expansion was a benefit.

- Showing controversial court trials on television expands justice in our country.
- Showing controversial court trials on television hinders justice in our country.
- Showing controversial court trials on television has no impact on justice in our country.

Seeing Is Not Always Believing

Fred Davis dropped Tony Taylor off and then drove slowly home from the meeting at Raymond Johnson's house. His mind was filled with doubts. How do people always get in such messes, he wondered? Did all this really start from me complaining about my son Jerry and the mid-winter dance? How could things get so difficult to solve? Are people doomed to not understand each other? Are parents forever going to be at odds with their own children? How can it be so easy to understand positions and interests when you just sit back and think about them, and so hard to do it when you are arguing? Can people ever stop arguing? Can we ever stop a war if we can't even get a small community to agree on how kids should or shouldn't dress? How can I let Jerry know that I really care? Fred pulled into the driveway.

He trudged into the kitchen. Jerry sat at the table, his school books scattered here and there, along with loose papers, pencils, pens, erasers, a calculator, an atlas, and a steaming cup of hot chocolate. "Hey, Dad," Jerry said.

Fred looked at his son. "Cup of hot cocoa sounds good to me too," Fred said, walking to the cupboard, ripping open a packet of instant cocoa, and pouring water from their stained old kettle into his favorite mug. "Doing homework?"

"Brilliant deduction, Dad," Jerry said, sighing to himself. He was tired. He was tired of being angry at his father. His dad sat at the table, clearing a space for himself by neatly stacking Jerry's textbooks into a small tower. "So, Dad, how was your meeting?"

"It was okay," Fred answered distantly. The two sat quietly, except for slurping their drinks. Fred gazed around the room. He noticed his copy of National Geographic, the one with the penguins on the cover. It was on the counter, all bent and bruised. Had he left it there? It looked like someone had been sitting on it all day. The furnace in the basement clicked on and the pipes began to rattle. Fred finally looked up. "Remember when we were trying to decide on a used car and we were looking at a Toyota™ and a Dodge™, the one with the broken mirrors?"

"You mean before Uncle David gave us his van?" Jerry asked.

"Yeah," Fred answered. He was staring out the window, frost building in the corners of the frame. "We had this great discussion. It started as an argument. You wanted me to buy the Toyota™ and I was thinking of the Dodge™. And you asked me all these terrific questions. Do you remember?"

"No. Kind of. Not really." Jerry did remember the Toyota™. It had a new stereo.

"Well," Fred went on, "you never tried to get me to change my mind. All you did was ask me to tell you why I wanted to buy the Dodge™. I remember one question in particular. I said I thought Dodges™ were safer vehicles, bigger, better able to stand up to an accident, and that they got good gas mileage. And you said you also believed the Dodge™ was bigger, but you didn't believe it got better gas mileage. Then you said to me - this is the question I'll always remember - 'Could you help me to understand why you believe they get better mileage.' It was such a great question! You weren't trying to trap me or prove me wrong. Do you remember that?"

"Sort of. Not really." Jerry was struck by how much one person could remember of a conversation and how much someone else couldn't. "I don't understand why it was such a great question."

"You see, this is what I'm just making sense of from this uniform thing," Fred said, his voice perking up. "That question about the gas mileage asked me to help you understand what I believed. I believed the Dodge™ got better mileage. You didn't believe it but you wanted to know why I believed it. I really thought if I could explain about the gas mileage you would have been willing to believe it too. But I couldn't explain it! So I asked you to tell me how you believed Toyotas™ got better mileage. And you told me all this stuff about fuel ratios and wheel bases..."

"Oh, yeah, I remember that now!" Jerry laughed. "I was amazed that you let me tell you all that stuff. I mean, you know, parents don't usually take the time to understand what kids really believe ..."

"Right. No one around here is trying to understand anyone else these days! It's just been attack, attack, attack. What you don't know is that I was actually considering buying the Toyota™ after all, because I thought the gas mileage was important. I came to believe it too."

"Funny, Dad, cause I actually believed you about the safety thing. Not that I was going to admit it." Jerry remembered it all now. He took a long sip of his cocoa. "Good thing Uncle David gave us the van."

"So," Fred said, his mind clear and ready to move forward, his hands spread out on the table. He was staring enthusiastically at Jerry. "What if we asked each other believing questions about the uniform rule? Not to try to trap each other or have an argument, just to...try believing first. And we could actually admit it if we find something to agree on. Just to try to listen and maybe believe it too, before we disagree. Let's find out what we agree on, what we both believe is true about school and Centerville and clothing. And then we can find out what we don't agree on. Okay?"

Jerry nodded slowly, not quite sure what his Dad was proposing. He did like it when his dad got all excited.

"Like this: Jerry, I know you believe that the school is a better place because kids can dress all sorts of weird ways. Tell me what makes you believe that."

"Okay, Dad," Jerry said with some hesitation. Jerry still wasn't sure where this was heading, but it seemed safe. He had no energy left for another argument on this subject. Of course, the alternative was his Spanish homework. He leaned back into the kitchen chair. "It's a better place because we don't want people to grow up to be robots. We want people to have their own ideas, to write their own compositions, to do their own math work, and find out what they like and dislike, not just be pressured to be part of the crowd all the time. Clothing is another way kids are themselves."

Fred was quiet for a moment. "I also believe we want kids to be themselves, and to do their own tests and reports. I'm not happy that you work as much as you do to buy clothing, but I believe that you are being yourself doing that. What about kids who don't have money for clothing? I wonder if they would say the way they dress is being themselves. That's one of the things I have trouble believing. Can you help me with that one?"

It was Jerry's turn to be quiet. Before he could find an answer, Fred jumped in. "You don't feel attacked by my question, do you?" he asked Jerry.

"No," Jerry answered slowly. "It's a good question...it's just weird to talk this way."

"Yeah, isn't it?" Fred said with a big smile, and a mustache of hot cocoa, on his beaming face.

Letter to My Granddaughter

Dear Amy,

It is the night before the School Board meeting, and I am picking out and fussing over my clothing for that event. Isn't it funny? I haven't been to a School Board meeting in thirty years, not since the big debate about integrating the schools. Now I am going to another meeting because we are deciding what clothing children may wear. It doesn't seem so important, does it? Compared to stopping racial hatred this conflict seems rather silly to me. But I am really going to the meeting to see you, because I am so proud of you. I want to hear you speak in front of the whole town. I want to elbow the people around me and say, "That's my granddaughter up there!"

I thought I would take a few minutes to tell you what I believe about the uniform issue. It's late and I know you're in bed by now, so I'll write it down. I'll drop it off in the morning when I come to borrow your mom's brown belt. Besides, aren't letters fun?!

I am not going to speak in front of the town. It is your turn. It is good for young people to speak. You are the future leaders, and you have to learn to make decisions, to do what is best for our community. But I hope you will take the time to consider what I believe.

Clothing styles are always changing. In the past seventy years so many different fads have come and gone. I think this trend has gotten worse with the coming of television. It's hard to resist all those commercials!

I think it is much harder to be a teenager these days. You have so much more to think about. I never had to consider saying "no" to drugs or which movies might be too violent for my tastes. I didn't even care much if I was too fat or too thin. I did have one worry that I think all teenagers share: having and keeping good friends.

I remember a boy from my neighborhood. He was new in town. His name was Clyde Ducker. Poor boy. He had that funny name, and he wore really thick glasses. Notice I didn't tell you if he was intelligent or friendly or a good athlete. He was teased right from the start. Now I hear he is a millionaire somewhere in Texas.

I think it is good for teenagers to rebel--the world needs to be shaken up by each generation--and I would like it very much if your generation rebelled by refusing to wear every new fashion. I believe the world would be a better place if we cared a lot less about our looks, and a whole lot more about what we do and say. It would take courage to throw away all your make-up and hair sprays and let the world judge you by your inner beauty. It would take courage to ignore what all the other kids think looks good. It would take courage to make the world a better place. Maybe a uniform would make it easier for all the teenagers to see what lovely people you all are inside.

But, you see, I'm your grandmother. I know how beautiful you are inside.

Love,
Grandma Lillian

Chapter 9

Research

Goals

This chapter helps students to identify the importance of research in finding solutions to conflicts, and gives them a framework for beginning to research for themselves the background to the national debate on uniforms in schools.

Materials

copies of Handout 9-1 for each student

Time

30 mins. scene reading and discussion questions
15 mins. activity 2
15 mins. activity 3
varied timed depending on homework tasks activity 4
20-30 mins. activity 5
varied time depending on depth of task activity 6

Background for Teachers

One of the many developmental tasks for adolescents is identifying their own, unique beliefs. At times this means separating themselves, by degrees, from the opinions of their parents. It can also mean separating themselves, by degrees, from the opinions of their long-time friends. Engagement with school curricula often provides the content for the evolution of their opinions. It is the development of personal beliefs, and the articulation of those beliefs within a community, that is the foundation of an active democracy.

A second, concurrent task for adolescents is developing the skill of supporting their opinions with information. Teachers ask students to use quotes in their book reports, to cite a theorem when constructing a geometric proof, to back up an historical thesis with data, and to examine the techniques of advertising and propaganda in forming public opinions.

As educators we hope that our most persuasive students will combine effective speaking and writing skills with a solid foundation of information. For many students who have been on traditional debate teams, the efforts and rewards of researching an issue are among the most significant benefits of debating.

Within a dialogue we also seek informed opinions. We ask students to research the many facets of an issue in order to be better equipped to build a solution that is persuasive and viable, rather than researching a "side" in order to criticize the other "side." We hope students will begin research with a series of questions they want answered, rather than a set of positions they want confirmed.

Research connotes many activities. Using a library for research purposes may be a new skill for many students; they may be surprised by the variety of resources. The Internet can quickly bring a world of data into the classroom. Surveys and polls allow for qualitative and quantitative research within the students' communities, as do interviews. Government offices and agencies are another rich source of information. By opening up research to all the sides of an issue, rather than confining it to one position or another, the search for documents and opinions can be a creative treasure hunt through the vast resources in the larger world.

Activities

1. Have students read Scene Nine of the Centerville controversy. The following questions can be used after reading the scene to help students consider the importance and place of research in solving a conflict.

- Cheryl wants to do research to find out "...how useless a uniform rule is." What might she find in the library to give her that information? What problems may she encounter in her research?

- What benefits can one get from "...find(ing) out what the other side has learned..." as Amy suggests?

- What might be annoying to Amy about people having opinions without "doing their homework"?

- Cheryl thinks Joey's pamphlet is filled with bias. What clues might be in the pamphlet that would let a reader know it is based heavily on one point of view?

- What's good and bad about using biased research in solving a conflict?

- What resources are available in a library to get information about uniforms in schools?

- Where else and how else can one get information about uniform rules?

- In what ways can an article that is not taking a side on the uniform issue be useful in solving the conflict?

2. Identify questions. Lead a brainstorming session - this may be done with the whole class or in small groups - to gather as many questions as the students can generate concerning information they would want to know about the uniform issue. Do not limit the questions to the fictional city of Centerville; invite them to consider their local area or even the national scope of this issue. Some of the questions they may generate include:

a. Is it legal to require uniforms? Have uniform policies been challenged in the courts? What were the outcomes of the court cases?

b. How many communities in the United States currently have uniform policies? What information is available to measure the impact of the policy on the school community?

c. What would the cost be of buying a uniform? In communities where there is a uniform policy, who pays for the uniforms?

d. In a survey of their own school community, what questions would help them gather public opinion about the hopes and fears of a uniform policy?

e. Can uniforms violate the religious beliefs and practices of citizens? What then?

f. How does one measure whether a uniform policy has accomplished its goals? How long does it take for a uniform policy to accomplish its goals?

3. Identify resources. Lead the students in categorizing and grouping the questions generated from activity #2 above. They may combine questions and eliminate duplicates. Sets of related questions will be referred to below. Then lead the students in generating a list of resources in order to find answers to their questions. Resources can be as varied as talking to an aunt who is a lawyer to searching the Internet to writing to the Board of Education of a city.

You may choose to generate the list of resources in a "carousel brainstorm" method. In this method, the research questions are written on large pieces of paper and posted around the room. Each sheet of paper should have one research question on it.

Students work in groups, and at a given signal from you, the groups spend a few minutes at a research question, creating a list of resources that might help answer that question. When you give another signal, all the groups move to the next question, and continue in this fashion until each group has visited each question and written their contributions to the lists of resources. You may invite a librarian to be in the class to contribute his or her ideas as the students review their lists.

4. Conduct research. Using the ideas generated from activity #3 above, have each student be responsible for gathering information on this issue. All the information may then be displayed on a bulletin board, organized into a folder, set up on a table, etc. This information will be important to access when the students try to build solutions to the Centerville conflict in the following chapter.

5. Encourage students to reflect on their research experiences. After reviewing the information the class has uncovered, the following questions can be used for a journal activity and an assessment tool.

a. Before starting your research, what was your position on the usefulness of requiring uniforms for students?

b. What information have you seen that supports the requirement of school uniforms?

c. What information have you seen that does not support the requirement of school uniforms?

d. In your mind, of all the information gathered, which seems the strongest in supporting a position? Why is that?

e. What have you learned from the information that you didn't know before?

f. What impact do you think all the information will have on the dialogue about school uniforms?

g. How could the process of gathering information have been improved?

6. Connections to Literature, History, Social Studies

The activities listed above can be used in part or whole for other issues and curricula. Below is a list of miscellaneous topics. Use these or other topics to give students additional practice in identifying questions and/or conducting research. Each topic will generate its own unique sets of questions and paths to finding information. With each topic encourage students to seek information that reflects all the positions and interests; there will be time for them to articulate their own opinions as the work unfolds if indeed they conduct research. Some possible topics include:

- using animals for scientific research
- the choice of dropping atomic bombs on Japan in World War II
- using *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and other controversial novels
- the requirement of a foreign language course
- the use of a designated hitter in baseball
- the age to begin teaching algebra.

Who's Done Their Homework?

"Cheryl! Cheryl Wells!" Amy Cochran wanted to yell the name, but she was in the library, so she sort of hissed it out. Many heads turned momentarily and then descended back into books and magazines and computer screens.

Cheryl walked slowly across the room towards the table where Amy sat. Amy was surrounded by papers and books. Cheryl gave Amy her best frown and then a cold stare.

Amy looked at her and wanted to smile. Cheryl was so tough and so smart. Amy decided to hold in her smile, and with a cool look up she said, "So, Cheryl, you're not going to talk to me anymore?"

Cheryl stood there quietly for a moment, kicking her toe against the old carpet, trying to hold onto her frown. It was impossible. She still liked Amy. "Well, you beat my brother in that high school election thing. Don't you think it will be dissing him to be friends? Just cause you were my baby sitter doesn't mean...I mean...oh, forget it." Cheryl smiled. "I'm glad you beat Malcolm in that election. His head was too big already."

Now Amy smiled. "Here, sit down. What are you doing here tonight?"

Cheryl twisted her face into a painful expression. "I have to look up some stuff about school uniforms. My teacher wants to have a debate and I have to find out information for my side. Like how useless a uniform rule is. Stuff like that."

"That's sort of what I'm doing," Amy said. "Except that I'm not looking for information for one side. Don't you think it's silly to just find out what one position is? Why don't you find out what the other side has learned as well?"

"What do you want me to do?" Cheryl asked. "Look up the whole library?"

Amy scanned the piles of books and papers in front of her and sighed. "No, it's too late to look through the whole library. I've pretty much got it all here."

"So what are you doing this for?" Cheryl pulled a magazine from Amy's pile and began to flip through an article.

"Well, you see, I'm making a presentation at the School Board meeting before they vote on the uniform proposal. You know, you can come and watch. But I also just got so frustrated listening to everyone around here. First they published their biased polls, so that you couldn't tell anything other than what the person who wrote the poll wanted you to find out."

"Yeah, my teacher showed us one of them. Then she made us write our own questions. She wanted us to see how hard it is to write a good question." Cheryl paused for a moment. Amy looked up. "I got an "A" on it, of course."

"Of course you did," Amy said. "Now we have to get some real information in this town. I haven't heard one person yet actually use any data or research on this. Everyone has an opinion. Everyone has an opinion on everything! But who's done their homework? Who's tried to find out if there's any information on uniforms in schools?"

"Shh, Amy," Cheryl whispered. "I'm sitting right here."

A male voice suddenly interrupted. "I can tell you who's done some research around here!" It was Joey Petner, leather jacket and boots and all, sitting down at their table. He plunked a pamphlet on the table. "There's plenty of information about what's good about uniforms right here."

"Where'd you get that, Joey?" Amy asked. She reached across the table for it.

Joey pulled it back. "Not so fast, Cochran. Who's side are you on?"

"Why do I have to be on a side?" Amy shot back.

"Yeah, why does she have to be on a side?" Cheryl challenged Joey.

Joey spoke directly to Amy, as if Cheryl weren't there. "Because sometimes there's one right thing to do, and in this town, it would be making the rich kids who live on the hill be a bit more like the rest of us."

"I don't want to be like any kid on the hill," Cheryl said in her best bold voice.

Joey stared at her across the table. "So, what do you want, kid?"

"Nothing that you've got in that skinny little book of yours," she replied, pointing at his pamphlet. "It's not even a library book. It's probably filled with a lot of bias. Right, Amy?"

Joey sneered. "Yeah, like you can believe everything you read in the library? I sure wouldn't."

"I never read that pamphlet," Amy said. "Didn't see it on the shelves when I was collecting all this other stuff." She casually reached across the table, and this time Joey let her take the pamphlet.

"You didn't see it on the shelves because it wasn't on the shelves," Joey said. "Not everything in the world is in the library. I ordered it from some guy on the Internet. I came here to see if there's anything else, and the librarian said you were here first, cleaning out the shelves. Is this all of it?"

"I hope so," Amy sighed, "I hope so." She took a look at Cheryl and Joey. "I'll make a deal with you two. I can't possibly look through all of this on my own. But why don't we share all of this stuff, and Cheryl gives Joey anything she finds about uniforms working well, and Joey, you have to give Cheryl anything you find that is against uniforms in schools. And I'll tell both of you what I find. And then we go to that old copy machine in the lobby and make copies of everything we want."

Joey said, "I don't understand the point of your getting stuff from both sides." He slowly shook his head, as if Amy were wasting her time.

"It's another kind of research," Amy answered. "I'm not defending a position. I'm just curious. Maybe I'll get to the place where you're at and want to convince people of something. Right now I just need more information to make my opinion. When I do that, I'll be stronger at getting my point across because I'll know what everyone is thinking."

"That's why she's the class president!" Cheryl beamed at Joey, as if that were the answer to his biggest riddle.

"That's why she's a politician, kid," Joey came to his own conclusion.

The three of them sat at that table, passing articles back and forth, with an occasional, "Here's one for your side," thrown in for good measure. Whenever Cheryl was confused, she would say, "I don't know whose side this is!" and slide it to Amy. When Joey was confused, he quietly slid the article next to Amy's pile as well.

Amy wasn't sure what Joey meant by calling her a "politician." As the three students were finishing the enormous pile of books and articles, Amy took the time to sit back and smile at her two companions, the three of them so different, each making different uses of the same materials.

Chapter 10

Building Solutions

Goals

The goal of this chapter is for students to use their many dialogue skills in order to meet their individual and mutual interests, and/or identify the interests that remain unmet. We hope that after this chapter, when a controversial topic arises, someone will shout, "Let's have a dialogue!"

Vocabulary

interests
solutions

Materials

copies of Handout 10-1 and 10-2 for each student
easel paper and markers for four groups of students

Time

30-45 mins. scene reading and discussion questions
60-90 mins. activity 2, 3, 4 & 5
30 mins. additional practice
20 mins. student assessment form

Background for Teachers

Building solutions to conflicts and problems involves meeting the interests of *both* (or all) parties involved in the dialogue. If one party has significant interests that are not addressed, resentment can build, and possible solutions may be sabotaged; in fact, the original conflict may return in an even more escalated form. When both parties feel that their interests have been met, they are less likely to begin this conflict again, and they may find that they have a better relationship.

In many situations people are rushed to build solutions without having taken the time to dialogue, to share differing perspectives, and to listen carefully. In this formal dialogue, building solutions is a culminating event, when the results of all the previous activities merge into ideas that are actively negotiated between the two teams.

Activities

1. Have students read Scene 10 of the Centerville Uniform Controversy. The following questions can be used to help them begin to understand the ways that a dialogue can help build solutions.

- In what ways is it "...easier to find solutions without a big crowd watching," as Vivian Brown thinks? (Encourage students to consider how hard it is to sort out a problem with a large crowd or an unruly audience.)

- Tony Taylor says, "If you want something done right, you gotta do it yourself." When is this true and when is it not true?

- What were the Davis' hoping to accomplish by dressing as they did?

- What are the differences between dressing exactly the same and dressing almost the same?

- Are there always more than two sides to an issue? When and when not?

- Fred Davis says "Isn't it true that the surest way to keep a conflict going is to see only two sides to the issue?" Can you explain his thinking? Do you agree with him?

- How would it make a difference if Todd Smith and Tony Taylor had similar hopes for Centerville?

- If Tony Taylor is in favor of a uniform rule, what makes him say to the kids, "I don't care what sort of slobs you look like."?

- Evaluate Katherine Cochran's use of an "I Statement."

- Does Amy Cochran's question to her mother sound like she is willing to believe her, or is she trying to prove her mother is wrong? How so?

2. You have now reached the time for holding a formal dialogue, the culminating event of this curriculum. The steps below parallel the outline in Appendix A for having an organized and scored version of a dialogue, one which would be an alternative to a debate. The scoring is designed to help students identify, assess and improve their skills. Our hope is that students will internalize the concepts, skills and attitudes that they have learned through this curriculum for use in dialogues of many forms: meetings, conversations, interviews, and all sorts of discussions which do not involve scoring.

Divide the class into small groups (4-5 people). Each group will represent one of the groups in the story:

- a parent group in favor of the uniform policy
- a student group in favor of the uniform policy
- a parent group opposed to the policy
- a student group opposed to the policy.

Based on all of the readings and discussions the class has done throughout the curriculum, **have each group brainstorm all the interests of their assigned group.**

In their small groups the students must come up with as many solutions to their assigned interests as possible. Ideas offered can be comprehensive, possibly solving the whole problem; or they can be smaller, potentially being pieces of a larger solution. Sometimes it can be helpful to look for ways to solve parts of a conflict and build off of those later. Depending on the students you may limit the solutions to ones that are viable, or allow for as much creativity as possible.

3. Ask each group to share their interests and corresponding solutions, and display them for use later in this activity.

After all four groups have displayed and explained their ideas, inform students that the class is going to review the solutions together to evaluate whether they meet the interests of *all* the parties, not just the group who thought of that solution. Students may respond with three possible evaluations: "It won't work " or "It might work " or "It should work."

Remind them that some of the ideas might be parts of a larger solution, thus the evaluation "it should work" does not have to mean it should work all by itself to solve the whole conflict. Instead, "it should work" has to mean that it doesn't hurt any group and should work on at least a piece of the problem. Likewise, "it won't work" does not mean a specific idea is insufficient all by itself to solve the whole conflict, instead it means it actually goes against a group's interest. Think of "it won't work" as veto power.

Go through the solutions,
-- drawing a line through solutions that students say won't work for at least one party,
? putting a question mark next to ideas that might work for all parties, and
✓ putting a check mark next to ideas that should work for all parties.
In each situation ask for people to give a reason to support their evaluation. Remind them that the goal is to find solutions that meet the interests of all parties.
4. After all the solutions have been evaluated, **ask the participants to organize the results into a plan that should meet the interests of all parties.** Solutions evaluated as "it might work", which are identified with a question mark, can be altered or clarified and included in a solution. Encourage solutions that synthesize various options.

Ask students what concerns they have from this plan, and whether they think this plan would be acceptable to all parties and thus solve the uniform controversy at Centerville High School.

If the group is unable to come up with a plan that meets the interests, have them re-evaluate solutions that were crossed off the list, or generate new ideas.

5. Lead a discussion that involves the following questions.

- What did you notice about building solutions in this way?
- What was easy? What was hard?
- Which steps in this process seem the most important or valuable to you?

Review and discuss the following steps necessary for building solutions.

A. Identify all the interests of both (or all) parties.
B. Brainstorm possible solutions for each interest.
C. Cross off solutions that either side would not accept.
D. Group the solutions that are acceptable.
E. Evaluate the ways this group of solutions will work and won't work.

For extra practice

1. In Student Handout 7-4 the class considered the deep interests of people in a number of different situations. Divide the class into different sides for each situation. Follow the steps listed in the activity above to practice brainstorming solutions and creating a plan.

Driving Through the Storm

At 3 pm, as the elementary school bell rang, a light snow began drifting down from the dark clouds. At 4 pm Vivian Brown stared from her office window in City Hall. She was watching people brush the snow off their cars. People were leaving their jobs a bit early, nervous about driving conditions. "Good," thought Vivian Brown. She organized her briefcase for the School Board meeting. She pulled on her boots for the short walk to the high school. "The snow will keep at least a few people away. Only the serious ones will show up on time. Maybe it will be easier to find solutions without a big crowd watching." She wrapped her scarlet red scarf around her neck and headed into the storm.

Tony Taylor was pleading on the phone and watching the snow blow across the hood of his pick-up truck. "Larry, man, you can drive your Honda in this snow. You can make it to the high school easy," his voice was pleading. "It's barely snowing anymore." Tony was having no luck. "Right, Larry, sure. But don't blame me when your kid is beat up because he doesn't have on the right colors." One by one he called the people who had signed his petitions and surveys. One by one they told him they would be staying home tonight, and "Good luck, Tony. You don't need me. You'll do great," and they hung up. He grabbed his jacket and the snow shovel from the porch and headed out to his driveway. "If you want something done, you gotta do it yourself!" he thought angrily.

Amy Cochran was staring at the clothes hanging in her closet. She frowned. Nothing she wanted to wear was clean. It was just like this morning trying to get dressed to go to school. She wished she could believe what her grandmother said about inner beauty. She imagined that the uniform rule had been passed, and her closet was filled with hanger upon hanger of identical dull green jumpsuits like the type worn by jet pilots. Or maybe the School Board would recommend baseball uniforms for everyone. Or maybe something really snazzy, like Batman™ costumes. She giggled at the thought of an entire school dressed like Batman™. The middle school uniform could be like Robin™! She heard her parents getting ready for the meeting too. Her Dad was calling to her Mom, "Honey, which tie should I wear with this jacket? I'm clueless." A sudden gust of wind rattled her windows, reminding her to dress warmly no matter what.

The high school auditorium seats 550 people. At 6:30 pm Vivian Brown looked out at those seats from her position behind the table on the edge of the stage. Most of the seats were empty. Sitting in the section of seats to her left were the people in favor of the uniform policy. In the section of seats to her right sat the people opposed to the uniform policy. There were a few dozen students and a handful of spectators dotted here and there in the main section of seats. In the far back sat two senior citizens, one sleeping, the other knitting, perhaps both of them seeking shelter from the snow. Or maybe this was the excitement in town tonight.

The other members of the School Board had arrived, stamping their boots and shoes to get rid of the snow, draping their coats and hats over the backs of their chairs to either side of Vivian. "Good," she thought. "There are enough people here to make it official, and too few people here to start a riot." She reached into her briefcase and pulled out her gavel. Two quick loud knocks echoed through the cavernous room. The person sleeping in the back momentarily opened his eyes and then slouched back down. There was quiet.

The first speaker was Amy Cochran. She walked to the stage, the same stage where she had been many times as an actress in school plays and as the student government president during school meetings. In a clear, steady voice - a voice she had practiced to hide her nervousness - she presented the findings of the various surveys done around the town. The results of each survey contradicted the one that came before it. When heard one after the other the surveys formed a picture of a town in serious disagreement, without a common solution imaginable. Her own poll also produced a broad range of opinions, with one exception: there was wide-spread frustration that no one had yet tried to bring the community together on this issue. As Amy descended from the stage Lillian Cochran clapped, and Amy felt embarrassed.

But only for a moment. The doors in the back of the auditorium burst open, and the Davis' - Fred, Jerry, and Andrew - strode down the center aisle. All three of them were dressed exactly the same! White shirts, ties, dark pants. As they approached the front it was possible to see that they weren't dressed *exactly* the same after all. Their ties were different. Only Jerry had his sleeves rolled up. Andrew had a colorful pin attached to his pocket. Fred had on a hideous pair of cufflinks. Jerry was wearing a brightly beaded belt.

Raymond and Beverly Johnson caught Fred's eye. They waved for him to sit with their group. Jerry's friends were doing the same for him from their side of the auditorium. Instead the three Davis' stayed on their center course, and took seats all together in the very middle of the very front row.

Quickly Raymond Johnson made his way to Fred's seat, with Tony Taylor close to his shoulder. Amy Cochran hustled over to sit next to Jerry. Amy's grandmother, Lillian Cochran, came in from the edges - she wanted to know what the excitement was all about. Raymond whispered, "What's going on, Fred? You have an idea, don't you?" Amy dug her elbow into Jerry's arm. "Do you?" she asked him.

"Excuse me for interrupting your meeting down there," Vivian Brown spoke up from the stage. "We have our own meeting to run here." She swung her gavel in an arc as if it were a magic wand sprinkling good manners across the auditorium. She paused. She looked carefully at Fred Davis, a man she had known for years, one whose word and deed were always fair and generous. She had everyone's attention. "This is a public hearing so that the School Board can hear the two sides of the uniform issue and then make our decision. But..." she waited a moment before going on, "I have a feeling that Fred Davis and his boys are up to something that might help us. Is that so, Fred? Would you like to be the first speaker?"

In a flash Fred bounded up to the stage. Jerry followed at a slower pace, smiling at his dad's energy. Andrew just moved over one seat to be next to Amy Cochran.

"Thanks, Vivian!" Fred said for all to hear. Even the sleeping man in the back was awake. "Can you hear me back there?" Fred yelled. The guy waved his hand. "Okay. Well, my boys and I have been thinking this over. And with all apologies to Vivian, what she said a minute ago is just how we're stuck. She said that there are 'two sides' to the issue. Isn't it true that the surest way to keep a conflict going is to see only two sides to the issue? Because there are always more than two sides and maybe some middle ground or even higher ground! You just have to look and listen!"

"What my dad is getting at," Jerry said, and his eyes searched the room, making contact with Amy, "is that maybe we all could agree on solutions that aren't just "yes" or "no" to uniforms. We haven't even said what a uniform is. For instance, my friend Todd Smith over there" - Jerry pointed to Todd, standing in the group opposed to uniforms - "he wears the same sort of clothing to school everyday. That's his uniform. And Mr. Taylor over there" - Jerry pointed to Tony Taylor - "I've seen how he dresses for work everyday and that's his uniform."

"What Jerry is saying," Fred jumped in, "is that we have to have a dialogue about this. First, we have to all agree to listen to each other without interrupting. I'm sure Vivian Brown can handle that chore." He turned and smiled at Vivian, who gave the crowd her best stare and shook her gavel over her head.

Fred continued. His hands were energetically weaving the ideas together in mid air. "We have to listen to understand each other. We have to try to believe each other for a moment. Not to put each other down. We have to listen to understand what our deeper interests are. Maybe it will turn out that Todd Smith and Tony Taylor have a lot of similar hopes for Centerville."

"Yeah, so then what?" Tony called out.

"Mr. Taylor, you do not have the floor now," Vivian Brown called back sternly.

"He used my name!" Tony said. "Okay, okay, I'll shut up. I can listen. I can do that stuff. Go ahead, Fred."

"Thank you, Tony," Fred said. Behind him Vivian Brown let go of her gavel and laid it on the table. "So I know my good friend Tony doesn't want gangs to come to Centerville. He's one of the few of us who knows what that's like first hand."

"That's right," Tony called out. "Whoops, sorry."

"Okay," Fred went on. "Tony really believes that uniforms would make it tougher for gangs to get out of hand in the schools. And maybe uniforms will do that."

Jerry jumped in, and he faced his friends on their side of the auditorium. "None of us want to deal with gangs either, right? Frankly, I don't think uniforms will stop gangs. But what if Mr. Taylor is right? Would you change your mind? I might. Or, better yet, what if we all came up with a lot of ways to keep gangs out of Centerville, and we did it without having to wear uniforms. There must be lots of ways to deal with gangs. So, I bet Mr. Taylor could give up the uniform policy if he was sure that the town was doing enough to stop gangs. Right Mr. Taylor?"

"Can I talk now?" Tony Taylor loudly asked Vivian Brown. She nodded. "What you're saying is that I care more about stopping gangs than about uniforms? Yeah, that's true. I don't care what sort of slobs you look like."

Katherine Cochran was waving her hand to get attention. Vivian Brown called on her to speak. She stood up, straightening her blouse. "When you use the word 'slob', Tony, I feel upset, because these are fine children here, no matter what they wear, and I would like it very much if all of us could watch our language. There's no need to use words that hurt. And, if I may continue, I would like to know how we are going to address the issue of money and competition at the school for wearing new fashions. That's my interest."

"I have a question for Mrs. Cochran," her daughter Amy called out to everyone's laughter. Amy glanced to the stage; Vivian Brown nodded her to go ahead. "Mrs. Cochran, when you say you want us to address the issue of money and competition, I don't know how far you want to go with this. Would a uniform rule be all you want to do to address money and competition? Are you hoping this will lead to a change in our sports programs and our grading system?"

The gavel rang out. Vivian Brown spoke. "Here is what I want all of you to do. In your groups, write out your interests on this issue. What needs of yours will the uniform policy accomplish? What are your concerns and fears about what it will lead to or take away from you? Take several minutes so each person and group in this room can be clearer about they really need. When everyone is ready we will have a question and answer period - a dialogue is the word Fred Davis used - and make sure we understand each other."

Amy Cochran waved her hand and got Vivian's attention and a chance to speak. "There's one more thing," she said, standing up. Under her arm was a folder. "I found a lot of information about uniform policies. I had some help." She scanned the room until she made eye contact with Joey Petner, sitting by himself towards the back. He slouched down in his seat a bit more, although Amy thought he might have smiled for a moment before half his face disappeared into the collar of his jacket.

"That's right. I helped her!" Cheryl Wells called out and waved from her seat. Vivian thought about picking up her gavel, but Amy continued. "There have been other schools that have done this before. Before we go any further, I made copies of what we found out. It just seems better than everyone talking without knowing." She walked through the auditorium, handing each person a sheet that summarized her research. As she gave one to her grandmother, Lillian Cochran had no trouble understanding what it meant to have inner beauty. Even the man in the back row was nodding his head with approval before he fell asleep again.

Vivian Brown spoke up. "Thank you, Amy, and your friends. Let me review again what we're going to do:

> One - we will collect and separate our positions from our interests.
> Two - we will have a question and answer period to understand all the positions and interests, not to attack them.
> Three - we will review the information we were just handed.
> Four - we will brainstorm ways to meet each interest.
> Five - we will put together a combination of solutions to meet the interests of this community.

I believe this is what the Davis' meant when they said we have to look for more than the two sides to this issue. Maybe we will settle on a uniform policy after all. Or maybe one group or another will create a new array of solutions for the School Board to consider. It could be that we have stumbled on a conflict of interests that cannot be solved in this manner. I hope that is not the case. Let's get to work and see!"

And so the community of Centerville held its first ever dialogue, a practice of finding understanding and solutions to problems that has ever since changed the way people live and work together.

Building Solutions: Student Assessment Form

This worksheet is to be filled out after you and your classmates have built solutions for the uniform conflict in Centerville.

My name:______________________________

My group's interests:

1)______________________

2)______________________

3)______________________

What did we say to communicate our interests:

The other groups' interests:

1)______________________

2)______________________

3)______________________

What did they say to communicate their interests:

How do the solutions meet our interests:

How do the solutions meet their interests:

What are the weaknesses in the solutions for my interests:

What are the weaknesses in the solutions for their interests:

How could we have done better at building solutions for this conflict?

Appendix A: Format for a Dialogue

approximate time: 80 minutes

I) Opening statements - 2 minutes per team to state their positions and concerns.

II) Questioning and clarifying
   A) two rounds of one question and one optional follow-up question per team
   B) 10 minutes of open dialogue

III) Building Solutions
   A) for five minutes each team separately generates a list of solutions that may meet some of each other's needs
   B) a 5 minute round of open dialogue occurs to allow for clarifications
   C) another 5 minutes of each team separately building solutions
   D) the two teams have 10 minutes of open dialogue to jointly develop mutually satisfying solutions. This step in the dialogue is worth the most points.

IV) Closing statements - 5 minutes of preparation and then 5 minutes for each team to state:
   A) what is clearer now about everyone's original positions and interests
   B) what has changed in their thinking and how that change occurred as a result of what they have learned from the other team
   C) ways the solutions developed meet their interests
   D) what concerns they have in implementing the solutions

V) Judges' Scoring - 10 minutes - the judges give summary statements of their scoring decisions, including specific highlights from the dialogue.

Judge's Scoring Sheet

In each of the sections below, teams get a score from 1 to 5, where 5 is the highest (unless otherwise instructed). In the space below each section, judges should write specific examples which show when teams demonstrated the criteria listed. These must be shared during Stage 5 of this formal dialogue.

Scoring for Opening Statements

	Team #1	Team #2
Clarity	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Acknowledgment of other perspectives	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Cooperative tone and body language	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Using I statements	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Total points for openings		

Scoring for the Open Dialogue Sections

(These occur during stages II and III.)

	Team #1	Team #2
Active listening skills	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Using non-attacking questions	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Use of "I" statements if attacked	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Use of "I" statements to acknowledge positive remarks by other team	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Seeking acknowledgment that the other has heard correctly	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Not interrupting	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Apologizing for interrupting and/or attacking	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Teams agree they have listened enough or need extension to dialogue	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Checking for understanding of commonalities and differences	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Recognizing bias in questions	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Striving to ask non-biased questions	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Total points for open dialogue sections		

Scoring for Building Solutions

	Team #1	Team #2
Using research to support your interests	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Using research that includes the other team's interests	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Using creativity	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Viability of solutions offered	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Acknowledging other team's interests	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Subtotal		

Select one below

Work for all interests being met	10	10
Work for most interests being met	8	8
Work for many interests being met	6	6
Work for few interests being met	3	3
Not working to meet interests	0	0
Total for Building Solutions		

Scoring for Closing Statements

	Team #1	Team #2
Clear and organized language	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Non-attacking language	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Clear summary of all interests	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Acknowledging changes related to other team's participation	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Identifying how solutions meet interests	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Identifying concerns regarding solution set	1 2 3 4 5	1 2 3 4 5
Total for Closing Statements		
Overall Total		

Appendix B: Materials for a Dialogue on Requiring Students to Learn a Foreign Language

On Wednesday morning, the front page of the Westville Register was plastered with articles about neighboring Middletown abandoning its foreign language requirement. The decision was passed with a slim majority vote at the Middletown School Committee meeting the night before. This news sparked Westville residents to consider whether their town, too, should eliminate the high school requirement of studying foreign language for two years. Everyone was talking about it - at the dinner table, in the local cafe, on street corners, at the water cooler. Several people posted home pages on the Internet in order to air their views. It was even the week's topic on the local radio talk show. And, of course, Letters to the Editor poured in to the *Westville Times.* The Letters to the Editor on the following pages were printed.

Westville, like Centerville, is a fictional town with a controversy. The letters were created from the following source materials.

Allen, Michael G. and Alley, David. "Foreign Language Study in Georgia Middle Schools" (Washington, DC: Educational Resources Information Center, 1993).

Curtain, Helena and Pesola, Carol Ann Bjorstad. Languages and Children: Making the Match (New York: Longman, 1994).

Draper, Jamie B. "Dreams, Realities and Nightmares: The Present and Future of Foreign Language Education in the United States" (Washington, DC: Joint National Committee for Languages, 1991).

Marcos, Kathleen. "Why, How, and When Should My Child Learn a Second Language?" (Washington, DC: Access ERIC) .

To the Editor:

I give Middletown credit for ending the high school foreign language requirement. We should follow this example. I have been against this requirement all along. The government is forcing its way into what should be a family decision. I am 82 years old and have successfully made it through life without learning a second language beyond "bonjour."

Foreign language study is a specialty. Only a handful of kids have a talent for learning languages. These classes should be offered as an elective, just like chemistry can be taken as an elective.

Thank goodness my grandchildren live in another town, where foreign language classes are optional. If they were having trouble in those language classes, I would want to have the option to pull them out immediately. They do not need to lose their self-confidence just because they do not have a talent for learning foreign languages. There are plenty of things they can do to be successful without it.

Barbara Hill
Chestnut Street, Westville

To the Editor:

Are we fooling ourselves into thinking that teaching all of our children a foreign language is a good use of educational resources? After all, research shows that it takes 4-6 years of language instruction for most people to become proficient - not even fluent. Not only that, but for students to pick up the accent of the foreign language, learning should begin in 4th grade. Our town's language instruction does not begin until 7th grade. With the two year high school requirement on top of the two years of language instruction in middle school, our children are only receiving 4 years of foreign language instruction. This means that most will not even have achieved proficiency after all of this effort!

If we are going to invest our resources to require foreign language instruction, we should do it properly. This means having children begin in 4th grade. But this would require an even greater investment of resources. And where will we find that many elementary school teachers who are trained to teach a foreign language?

With this year's school budget crisis, we need to seriously reconsider the value of pouring resources into foreign language instruction. It always comes down to the bottom line: What is the return on our investment? If all we can answer is that every child in this town will graduate from high school knowing how to ask where the bathroom is in French when they visit Quebec (and must repeat the question three times, since the American accent prevents him or her from being understood), I am not sure it is worthwhile.

Priscilla Bailey, Manager
Bailey & Co., Westville

To the Editor:

I think it would be too bad if foreign languages were no longer required in high school. When I started learning Spanish last year, I can't say I was enthusiastic about it. If I was given the choice, I probably would have chosen something easy, like Drama, instead. But Spanish class turned out to be really fun, even if it is more challenging. And I get to do some acting in Spanish class, since we make up skits in Spanish and perform them every week.

I also love e-mailing my pen pal in Costa Rica. It is so interesting to get to know someone my age who lives in another country. I correct my pen pal's English, and she corrects my Spanish. We both make the most mistakes with everyday language, which we don't really learn in class. She has told me all about what her life is like, and about the natural beauty of her country. It sounds like it is very different from living here. I am applying to go on the student exchange program to Costa Rica next year, so hopefully I will get to meet my pen pal in person.

It would be too bad if kids are no longer required to learn foreign languages in high school. If I hadn't taken Spanish, I would have missed out on a lot!

Maggie Rice
10th grade student at
Westville High School

To the Editor:

I think it is important to help children develop so that they have as many life options open to them as possible. Requiring foreign language instruction greatly expands the future choices of children.

When I was a child, I was taught French in school. This allowed me to pursue my passions as an adult: biology and opera. I am a biologist, and spend every summer studying rare bird species in the Ivory Coast, which is a French-speaking country in Africa. I also adore opera. Many of the excellent operas are in Italian or Spanish. Since French is similar to both of these languages, I am able to understand many of the words in Italian and Spanish operas. The English translation just isn't quite the same.

As a child, I never imagined that I would spend my summers in the Ivory Coast, studying rare birds. And I was far from being an opera enthusiast. My sisters and I used to cover our ears and hum every time our father tuned in to the opera station when we were on a family trip. But now I cannot imagine feeling fulfilled without having both of these things in my life.

It seems too early, at the high school level, to make a decision about whether or not a person should learn a foreign language. Not learning one closes doors, which a student may have wanted to open in the future, had she or he known a foreign language.

Omar Lamb, PhD
Westville College, Westville

To the Editor:

This foreign language business is really diluting America. America is an English-speaking country, and the most important thing for students to learn in school is English.

Nowadays, many students are not even proficient in English by the time they graduate from high school! We need to direct as many resources as possible to teach English to make sure that our students are ready for college and work.

It would be a wiser investment to have students spend a few extra hours a week working on their English language skills, than have them learn a foreign language. Why confuse them even more?

Bob Smith
Concerned Parent, Westville

To the Editor:

Foreign language study is important for the future success of our children. Eliminating the requirement would be a mistake, especially since many school districts still have their foreign language requirements in place. If we want our kids to be able to compete with others for jobs and college entrance, we had better maintain our foreign language requirement. Studies show that students who have at least four years of foreign language study score higher on the SAT. In addition, if our kids learn foreign language in high school, they can earn college credit, which would allow them to focus on other subjects in college.

There is no question that eliminating this requirement would handicap our children when they have to begin competing in the world at large. Why would we want to do that? Life is tough enough as it is.

Mona Mazzei
Concerned Parent, Westville

To the Editor:

As an international businesswoman, I use my knowledge of foreign languages a great deal. Having learned French when I was a child, I have been able to pick up five additional languages - Russian, Japanese, Spanish, Portuguese, and Cantonese - which I use regularly in my day-to-day work. With the increasing globalization of the economy, being proficient in a foreign language is an important skill. It opens doors to a greater variety of career paths, many of which are growing areas of opportunity in our changing world.

The U.S. is falling behind as a superpower. The quality of education our students receive, compared to that of other countries, plays a large role in this. Educational achievement of American children is consistently lower than that of children in other leading countries, such as Japan and Germany. We can't afford to lower our educational standards even further by abandoning the foreign language requirement. Foreign language study helps students not only learn a foreign language, but achieve more academically in other areas, including English, social studies, and math. In addition, learning a foreign language has been shown to help students develop greater flexibility and creativity in their thinking. It also encourages students to develop their abilities to problem-solve and reason.

The benefits of foreign language instruction reach much further than learning the language itself. They speak to the quality of education we want to give our children to prepare them for the future. There is no question that foreign language should be considered a core academic subject, along with English, math, and social studies.

Celia Fay, Partner
World Enterprises, Inc.

DIALOGUE

Turning Controversy into Community

What would controversial discussion look like if it incorporated creative thinking and conflict resolution skills? It might be cooperative rather than competitive, and it might build rather than fracture community. This new curriculum paints a portrait of nonadversial dialogue through the story of Centerville, a fictional town caught in a controversy over whether or not to mandate [illegible] school uniforms. The story that unfolds provides a rich case study in how to resolve public, as well as interpersonal, conflict.

Teachers will learn techniques and structures for helping students build skills such as listening, managing their anger, communicating, researching issues, uncovering bias, understanding and appreciating different perspectives, and creating solutions.

Dialogue has ten skill-focused chapters which open with scenes from Centerville, followed by activities for teaching, practicing, and assessing skills. This unit is especially suited for social studies and English teachers and student government and debate team advisors.

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